

# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



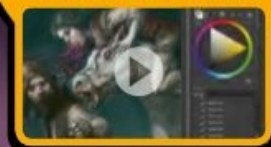
**LEGEND!**

**ALEX  
ROSS**

**INSIDE**

**ARE CONVENTIONS  
A CON FOR ARTISTS?**  
CLAIRE WENDLING'S  
ETHEREAL SKETCHES  
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**WONDER ART** TERRY DODSON ON WHY HE'S MORE THAN JUST A PIN-UP ARTIST



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# Welcome... to an inspirational issue



It's always inspiring browsing our FXPosé galleries of art. I'm forever impressed with the work on show – they're arguably the most important pages in the magazine. This issue, I was particularly taken with Daniel Tyka's comments on page 11. He reveals how he quit his job in a bank and then spent 16 hours a day toiling away on

his Wacom tablet, honing his craft to develop the required skills to be an artist who gets paid for what he creates. I'm sure that's the Holy Grail for most of you.

Take a moment to gaze at the art within FXPosé. They're where you get to see what your peers are creating and – if you submit your art – provide a showcase of your art to the world. So, if you haven't submitted your art yet, what are you waiting for? See what we need on page 19 and send your art in today!

A comics issue always brings excitement to the ImagineFX office. We were chuffed to be working with cover star Stanley Lau again, because as well as being a great artist, he's also such a positive force! If you're ever at a convention where Stanley is also attending, I urge you to go and chat with him. He's really approachable and humble.

Also in this issue, we've managed to squeeze in interviews with no less than three titans of the comic art world. Alex Ross and Terry Dodson both try to catch your eye with their mix of colourful, realistic and playful imagery, and Bill Sienkiewicz provides some wise words in his First Impressions slot on page 114. We really enjoyed putting this edition together, so we hope you enjoy it, too.

*Claire*

**Claire Howlett, Editor**  
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*Our special cover for  
subscribers this issue.*



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**Phone (toll-free):** 1-800 428 3003

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**"Apply realism to something fantastic and you've brought that thing to life"**  
Comic legend Alex Ross on his art style

## Reader FXPosé

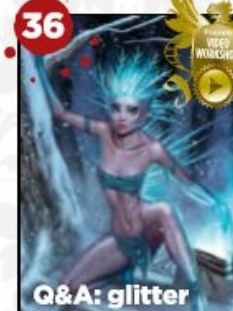
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art >>



Sketchbook: Claire Wendling



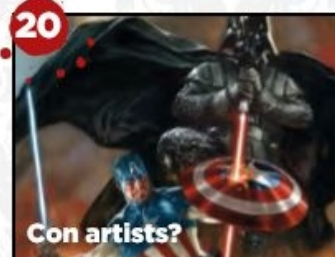
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Terry Dodson



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Turn over the page for this issue's art assets



Paint a comic superhero

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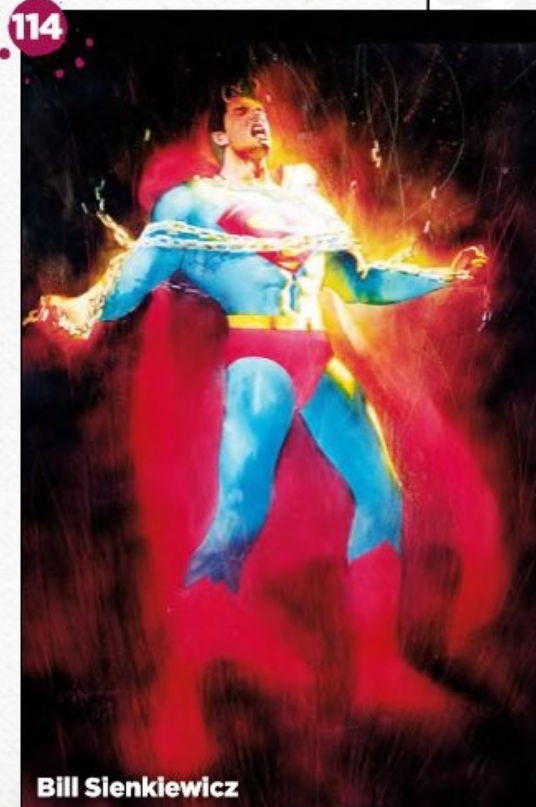
We visit London



Creature maquettes



A rough 'n' ready style



Bill Sienkiewicz





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**ImagineFX**

# Resources

Getting your hands on all of this issue's videos, artwork and brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at <http://ifxm.ag/upup117away>

**OVER 4 HOURS**  
of workshop and  
Q&A videos to  
watch and  
learn from!

## WORKSHOP VIDEO

### Make a horror comic page

Dave Kendall takes you from script to finished page of an animated graphic novel.



### GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

- 1 Go to the website**  
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):  
<http://ifxm.ag/upup117away>
- 2 Find the files you want**  
Search through the list of resources to watch or download.
- 3 Download what you need**  
You can download all of the files at once, or individually.



NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

#### EDITORIAL

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**NEXT ISSUE ON SALE**  
**FRIDAY 2 JANUARY 2015**

Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd  
Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd +44 (0) 207 429 4000  
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PF  
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**POST** ImagineFX Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

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**UK, EUROPE & REST OF THE WORLD**  
**UK PHONE** 0844 848 2852  
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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)  
[www.futureplc.com](http://www.futureplc.com)

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**abc** Print 13,157  
Digital 2,708  
The ABC combined print, digital and total circulation for Jan-Dec 2014 is  
**15,865**  
Approved by the Audit Bureau of Circulations

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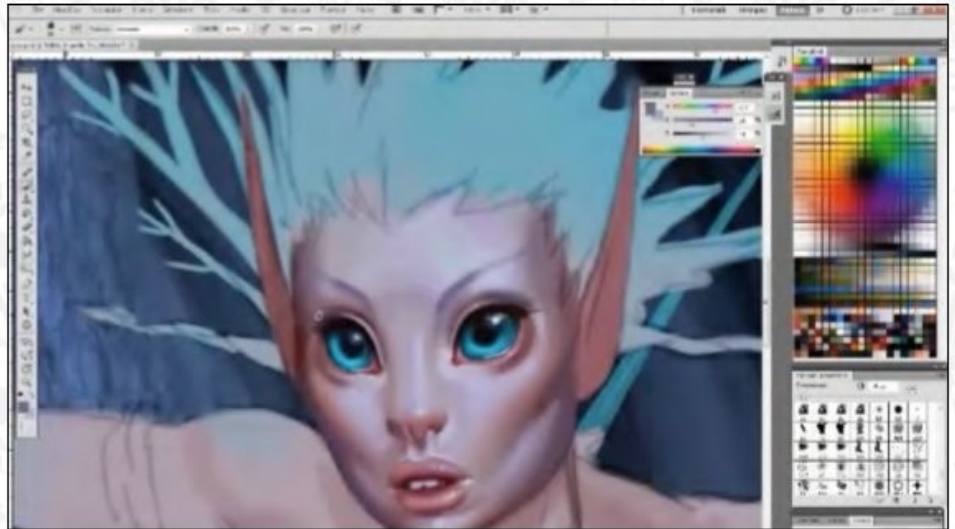
Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

## Q&A VIDEOS



### Sara Forlenza

Focus on lighting when painting eye-catching glitter on a frost-fairy princess.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



### Sara Forlenza

Think about focus and perspective to depict a thief running through a crowd.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



### Jonathan Standing

Adopt this perspective guides method – for both Photoshop and Illustrator.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



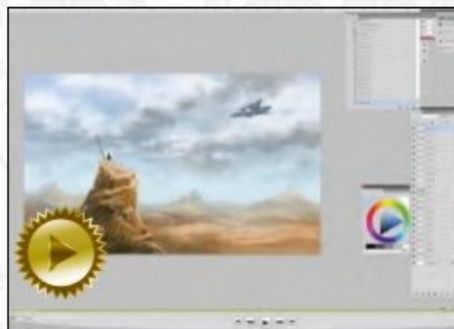
### Tony Foti

Think about light and reflections in order to paint realistic armour... on a dog!  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



### Dave Braggalla

Be aware of real-world creature anatomy to concept an original fantasy humanoid.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



### Jonathan Standing

Learn how to utilise layers to give your skies that crucial illusion of depth.  
**Plus WIPs and final image**



### Gil Rimmer

The artist shows how to create art where every element supports the story and characters, in his new training video.

**PLUS** WIPs and finished art available to download, created by accomplished professional artists from around the world, including Stanley Lau, James Gurney, Mark Molnar, Dave Kendall, Paris Christou, Dave Wilkins, Tula Lotay, Mitch Breitweiser and Kev Crossley.

Visit <http://ifxm.ag/upup117away> to download of all this issue's videos, image files and brushes





# Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART

ImagineFX  
ARTIST  
MONTH

## Finnian MacManus

LOCATION: US

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MEDIA: Photoshop, CINEMA 4D, Vue, ZBrush



Finnian is a concept artist, working with both 2D and 3D software, who specialises in fantasy and sci-fi environments.

"I taught myself my 3D workflow," he says. "It took several years. I'm now in my third year of the entertainment design programme at Art Center College of Design."

The Chicago-born, California-based artist regularly accepts studio work as well as freelance commissions. He's busy creating concepts for a collaborative project with fellow artist Lila Yu – an expansive, world-building exercise titled ARK.

**1 ACROSPAR RUINS** "This was one of my first phototexture experiments. I started with a small black and white breakdown and then layered photo textures on top, combining them using matte painting techniques and painting over the results. Using phototextures is a way to save a lot of time if you already have the fundamentals to manipulate them into your concept."



## Artist crit

Game artist Bartłomiej Gawel says  
Finnian's work is all about atmosphere...



"I really like the light in this piece, which resembles that of sunlight either before or after a storm. It gives this ruined fantasy setting a strong and intense atmosphere."





## **Ishan Shukla**

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**MEDIA:** Photoshop, Maya, DAZ 3D, Redshift



Before going freelance Ishan was employed at Singaporean studio MediaFreaks as a CG generalist and art director, spending three years creating animations for TV commercials and documentaries.

Over the past 18 months the Indian artist has been working on his own 15-minute short film, *Schirkoa*, inspired by favourite storytellers Hayao Miyazaki and Ken Levine. "I try to find the sweet spot between traditional drawing and non-photorealistic 3D in my work," Ishan says. "My favourite themes are dystopia and retro-futurism."



**1 GLOOMY MONDAY** "Most people don't like the thought of Monday mornings, and so in this image I wanted to showcase the claustrophobia and monotony Monday can invoke within a misanthropic individual."

**2 197A APARTMENT** "This is a retro-futuristic apartment for my upcoming short film. I want to start the story with warmish tones, before introducing the darker themes of the story."

**3 BAG EVERYTHING** "A lost train station in a sort of steampunk dystopian city. The advertisement in the corner sets the mood perfectly."

**4 GOLD DISTRICT** "A morning scene - again, in a steampunk setting."



## Daniel Tyka

LOCATION: Poland

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Maya



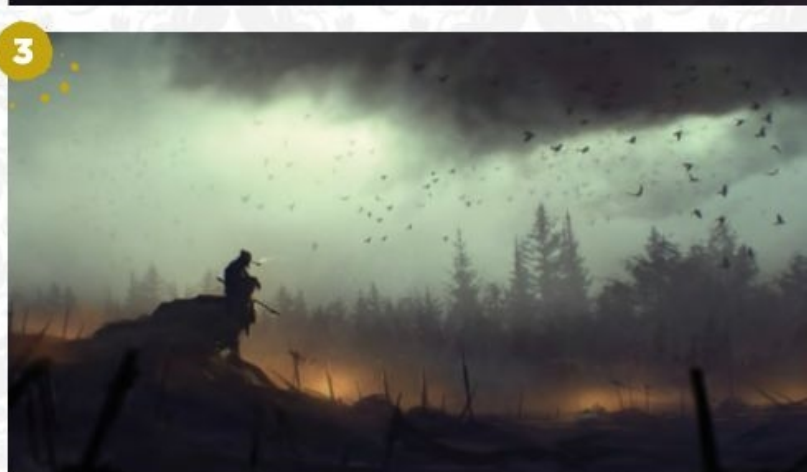
Seven years ago Daniel quit his job in a bank. It was one of the best decisions the Polish illustrator ever made. "I spent 16 hours a day in front of my Wacom Tablet, learning new techniques," he says. "It cost me my social life, but it paid off when I started getting commissions."

Inspired by dystopian futures, cyberpunks and sci-fi, Daniel's work tends towards the darker side, creating moody and often dark illustrations.

**1 BROKEN WORLDS** "I did this book cover for a collection of short stories written by different authors. The only common theme was dystopian futures. I included a dog, suggesting that even in a dark future there's still a place for simple relationships."

**2 DEALER** "This was a personal piece that summed up everything I've learned: 3D base rendering, ZBrush sculpting, photo texturing and photo bashing and, of course, tons of painting. I love to illustrate strong women and the cyberpunk theme was something I instantly fell in love with."

**3 AFTER BATTLE** "This was a speed-painting project for a Facebook group, created in around 50 minutes. I wanted to practise speed, composition and colour, as well as storytelling."





★ **Franklin Chan**

**LOCATION:** Hong Kong

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**MEDIA:** Photoshop, Maya, MODO



Franklin's love of illustration goes hand-in-hand with his love of films. "Growing up, I saw many films and felt inspired by epic sci-fi and fantasy scenes," he says.

The Hong-Kong-based artist studies photographs as he works, to add realism to his art. "The most important thing is to capture the mood you want to convey," he says. "It's like when you see an iconic shot from a classic film: you can practically feel the music and the unforgettable sensation it gives you."

**1 SUBURBAN** "My aim in this painting was to create a moody setting. It's interesting how bright light sources in the background add to the sombre atmosphere of the piece."

**2 JOURNEY** "This is a personal painting inspired by *The Hobbit* - the book, not the recent films."

**3 EVIL CORP** "I wanted to portray an evil corporation built on the remains of a city destroyed by an apocalyptic event. Unsurprisingly, the headquarters are based in the tallest tower."

**4 RESEARCH LABORATORY** "This is an environment design for a future game project that I worked on. The laboratory is set on Enceladus, one of the moons of Saturn."





3



**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"The idea of a cityscape at night is an original start and Franklin's created a scene of irresistible atmosphere and pregnant drama."  
**Daniel Vincent,**  
Art Editor

4





## Muhammad Dipo

LOCATION: Indonesia

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Even though he's a graphic design graduate, Muhammad prefers illustrating. "I use my 2B mechanical pencil to do almost all of my work, then retouch it in Photoshop," he says.

He's passionate about mechanical and industrial design, and his works take inspiration from biology, history, astronomy and even metaphysics. Striving for originality throughout each piece, Muhammad's art is both unique and aesthetically beautiful.

**1 T-15 TYRANT** "I like the old Russian T-Series tank with the rounded, sleek body and from there I developed the chicken leg feet."

**2 KINETIC WOLFPACK** "I wanted to depict a poster look usually seen in art books or graphic novels. The story is about a technologically engineered soldier and the future of robotics."

**3 DREADNAUT** "The idea was to create a space suit with both a classic and diesel punk feel. When almost finished I realised it felt Gothic."

**4 SHOCK COMMANDO** "The AMT-11 Commando is an elite mechanised walker for special ops. It can change configuration: from parachuting in via a HALO drop, or amphibious infiltration."







**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Big robots with big guns? Count me in! I love the way that Muhammad's armoured creations look like unstoppable machines of war, but still have a sense of personality about them."  
**Beren Neale,**  
Commissioning Editor



## Juan Pablo Miño

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**MEDIA:** Photoshop



Juan places as much value on meaning as he does on medium. His art – digital and traditional – spans comic art, illustration, character and graphic design. “The content of a work is important to me,” says the Argentine artist who writes under the name 4kum4, “the signs and symbols. More so than technical aspects.”

“I like dark things. I like to reflect on the human condition and how it will change in the future, analysing issues of contemporary philosophy such as trans-humanism and post-humanism, which inspire my stories and characters.”

### IMAGINEFX CRIT



“Juan is able to create a palpable mood through the use of interesting brush strokes. The visage of the creature in his Edloeiske Lemniscata image is only loosely defined, yet the end result dominates the disturbing artwork.”

**Gary Evans,**  
Staff Writer



**1 EDLOEISKE LEMNISCATA** “This painting is based on a strange story I heard at school. A student literary club became fascinated by an ancient book of astronomy. Shortly after discovering the book, members began disappearing overnight. The only clue: the word lemniscate, written on a table. Maybe it was just a rumour...”

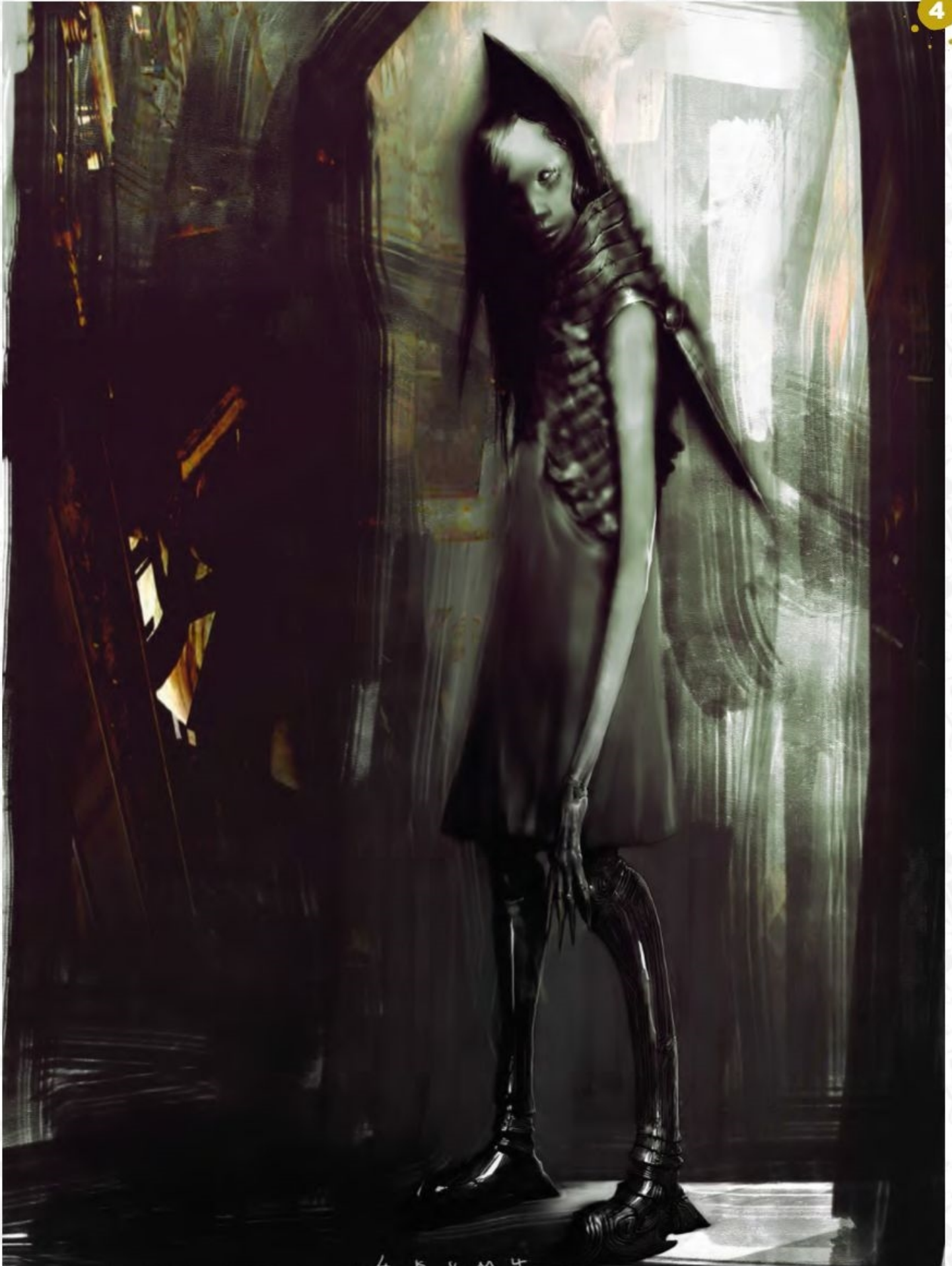
**2 CRAPICEL** “Crapicel roams an infinite space. Her synaptic matrix is the only clue that she’s a creation of artificial intelligence.”

**3 NO TITLE** “I don’t wish to comment on this piece. I like the idea that there’s an air of mystery surrounding it.”

**4 KUCARA** “Strange creatures roam the lower levels of an ancient world. The chaos caused by the third crisis, coupled with the uncontrolled pollution and genetic manipulation, resulted in the subdivision of the human race.”









**Roberto Oleotto**

**LOCATION:** Italy

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**EMAIL:** [on@onthesign.it](mailto:on@onthesign.it)

**MEDIA:** 3ds Max, V-Ray, Nuke, Photoshop



Roberto kicked off his artistic career at the School of Photography and Graphic Design, and uses photography theory in his art work. "Creating an image with good composition and attractive light is crucial to great matte painting," he says.

Starting with a speed-painting and a specific concept, Roberto always sticks to his tried-and-tested work method. "The rest of the time is spent searching references for photography and compositing," he says.

"I could create environments and images of fantastic situations for days. However, what interests me most is that moment that takes your breath away."

**1 MULTIVERSUM UTOPIA** "I recreated a post-nuclear disaster that would contrast with the heavenly ambience. I painted it in Photoshop, and hand-drew a lot of the destroyed city first."

**2 GO ATLANTIS** "I wanted to create a scene in Photoshop that had a sense of impending danger. Atlantis is the only shuttle that hasn't lifted off yet. I wanted to tilt the frame so it looked like a photo that was taken quickly."

**3 MULTIVERSUM MEMORY** "The initial idea was to create an artwork that would stop the viewer in their tracks. I created it entirely in Photoshop with the help of many photographic references."

1

**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Roberto uses his photography knowledge to great effect, drawing the viewer in with a clear focal point that not only demands attention, but makes you feel as though you're climbing into his worlds."

**Claire Howlett,**  
Editor



2







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3

### SUBMIT YOUR ART TO FXPOSÉ

Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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(maximum 1MB per image)

**Post:** (CD or DVD):  
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Peter Mohrbacher admits it was tough to make money at his first cons, but over the past 10 years he's made profit 90 per cent of the time.



## Convention fatigue

**Pros and cons** At big events, has artists' alley become an afterthought? We ask the experts if conventions are a con...



Marc Alan Fishman, whose Unshaven Comics make the Dreadnuts publications, says conventions weren't founded for the creators to make money.

**Dave and Denise Dorman spent \$7,000 to exhibit at this year's San Diego Comic-Con. They left the event, the largest of its kind in the world, \$1,000 down. This is despite Dave's standing within the comic book industry – an artist whose work includes convention favourites Batman, Superman, Indiana Jones and Star Wars.**

It was the same story at Wizard World, GrandCon and other events. Denise – who blogs about cons under the name Comic Book Wife – wrote a post explaining she interviewed several similarly high-profile artists and they all said they're not making money at cons.



"I have slowly come to realise that," Denise wrote, "in this selfie-obsessed Instagram era, cosplay is the new focus

of these conventions – seeing and being seen, like some giant masquerade party. Conventions are no longer shows about commerce, product launches and celebrating the people who created this genre in the first place."

Denise says she doesn't blame cosplay alone for low convention sales. She and Dave are honorary members of the world's largest cosplay organisation, The 501st Legion. The idea behind the post was to start a discussion about what exhibitors and convention owners could do differently.

### DISPARITY CONCERNS

Cons have a responsibility, Denise says, to give artist at least equal billing with actors. Artists' alley shouldn't be an afterthought. And they need to cut the cost of hiring booths and tables. She also points to a shift in the purpose of cons: from commerce-driven social events, to purely social events. Publishers are also muscling out artists.

"Convention collectability has moved from the artist to the publishers themselves," Denise says. "But if you focus on the big picture, people aren't looking to put





## HATBOY HUMPH

Because who hasn't attempted to affect the brooding noir-graphic-novel look? And it can take some very serious incentives to snap out of it...  
**Page 23**



## BLIZZARD IS BACK

Blizzard is to release Overwatch, its first new game for almost two decades. We speak with art director Bill Petras about the title's ambitious plans.  
**Page 24**



## ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Welcome to the intriguing workspace of the Shiftlett brothers. A place of fantasy sculpture, Frazetta originals, dentistry tools and dogs.  
**Page 26**



something on their walls or collect pieces to file in a portfolio somewhere. If they can't view it on their phone screen, their computer screen or stream it to their TV, they're not that interested in spending money on it. We live in the post-Napster era where "everything is free" is a mindset. Collecting artwork in real life is a diminishing pastime."

## THE PASSION FACTOR



Marc Alan Fishman from Unshaven Comics says conventions weren't founded for the creators to make money. They're somewhere fans come together for a shared passion.

"The general population – those Instagram-obsessed fans – gives more than just a damn for those creators who take the time to reach out and communicate," Marc wrote in response to Denise. "I say this admitting freely I've never seen Dave Dorman. And we've exhibited at the same shows more than once. I don't know

Dragon Spring, by Bob Eggleton, who thinks artists need to be selective about which cons they attend.

Despite being well known for his Batman, Superman and Star Wars art, Dave Dorman left SDCC with a \$1,000 loss.



specifically how Dave exhibits. But if he's like others I've seen over the past seven years, he may sit, smiling, awaiting those loyal regulars to come with cash in hand. In short, it's not enough any more. It hasn't been that way in a long time."

Marc's business relies heavily on cons. Unshaven treats these events as, "a straight business venture from the time the floor opens to the time they kick us out." Meanwhile, Kyle Gnepper – writer and

**“In this selfie-obsessed, Instagram era, cosplay is the new focus – seeing and being seen, like some giant masquerade party”**

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

## BOB EGGLETON

*The esteemed artist gives us his take on today's conventions*

### What do you do at cons and how valuable are appearances?

At monster genre cons I have a table and sell prints, sketches, meet people and sign things. Sci-fi cons tend to have art shows and one buys some panel space and puts work up. When I was starting out 30 years ago cons were the way to go. Now it's really more about the fan connection.

### Do you make a profit at cons? And if not, why do you go?

It depends. At some sci-fi cons I do quite well, such as at a Boston convention called Boskone. I was at the recent Rhode Island Comic-Con and I did quite well on prints. Some can be total disasters in terms of cost to get to, ship work to and so forth. I know artists who pay thousands and thousands of dollars and then maybe make a few hundred dollars in return! You have to know which one is best for you, then weigh up the costs.

### What do you love most about cons?

I love the connection, the kind words and meeting people who tell me my work inspires them. I dislike some of the smaller sci-fi cons where the focus is now overly fixated on fans-of-fans.

### If you were in charge of cons, how would you make them more worthwhile for artists?

Make the art more important. This is how Illuxcon and Spectrum Fantastic Art Live were born. Comic cons have become more media or electronic gaming fests that are impossible to get around for the crowds. The artists – many are classic comic artists – are shoved to the side. I get that some things are popular, but it seems the artists often get the wrong end of it.



Fantasy, sci-fi and horror artist Bob has won the Hugo Award eight times for his work. He's also a big Godzilla fan.

[www.bobeggleton.com](http://www.bobeggleton.com)





➔ salesman – stands and pitches Unshaven's products to anyone who'll listen.

The Chicago-based outfit – friends Marc, Kyle and artist Matt Wright – collects data at cons: they track every sale, profit, pitch-to-close ratio and demographic information. Marc says the newest generation of fans come to conventions to celebrate their love of the media. In the digital age, that love doesn't necessarily translate to sales.

"As much as this is a business of passion, we know the only edge we potentially have

Return of the Deep One, by Bob Eggleton. The artist says he dislikes some of the smaller conventions.

is working harder and smarter. We go to shows because we couldn't be a studio if we didn't. The conventions are our lifeblood. We don't sell our books in store – too much overhead, no promotion, no profit – so the cons are 99.99 per cent of our sales.

"As fans, conventions are the best place to fully immerse oneself in the greatest and most creative industry in the world. Those billions of dollars being shared across the multiplexes? That's because of comic books, and, in part, the continued expansion and growth of conventions."

**“Conventions are our lifeblood. They make up 99.99 per cent of our sales”**



Peter Mohrbacher's Herald of Dawn. He says he goes to cons primarily to feel part of the art tribe.

## A SELECTIVE APPROACH



Over the past 10 years, Peter Mohrbacher has turned a profit at 90 per cent of the conventions that he's attended. Events are

somewhere he does business in more ways than one: not only does he profit directly from sales, but he builds his audience, networks, finds new clients and partners, learns new techniques and practices. So much so that next year he's planning to invest even more in cons. He just picks the events that are right for him.

"Everything costs time and if one type of show or another makes me unhappy," the illustrator and concept artist says. "I'll do everything I can to invest my time in something I have better feelings about. Even

Eisner Award-winner Dave Dorman has been guest of honour at San Diego Comic-Con three times.



if I were to put a dollar value on my time at cons, the money has added up rather nicely over the past year as I've invested in them further. The net dollar amount from sales alone is almost always equal to or better than my standard day rate for freelance work."

But the real reason Peter goes to cons is enjoyment: "I love the sense of community. Artists are my tribe and it feels important to be a part of a tribe. It can be tiring to sell, draw, talk, sign – or even just stand around for 10 or 12 hours straight for several days in a row. But after, an evening out with friends can really make it feel worthwhile." ●





## Hatboy

by Vaughn Pinpin



**RD**

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Overwatch's characters exhibit a refined version of Blizzard's trademark exaggerated art style.

## The watch begins...

**Well overdue** Art director Bill Petras explains the thinking behind the look and feel of Blizzard Entertainment's first new franchise in 17 years...

Attendees at BlizzCon 2014 were first to hear that Blizzard Entertainment is to release its first new title in almost two decades. **Overwatch** is a multiplayer online battle arena game that introduces 12 new characters and a whole world for them – and gamers – to explore.

Blizzard, the team behind the World of Warcraft franchise, unveiled an action-packed theatrical trailer in which its stylised,

cartoonish characters showcase their skills during a standoff in a museum.

"We wanted to establish something new, but still keep to Blizzard's heritage of exaggerated style," art director Bill Petras



says. "Ultimately, the Overwatch art style is focused on readability of gameplay. We strove to create a handcrafted look for the



Overwatch is set on a near-future Earth and battles take place in real-world locations such as London and the pyramids of Egypt.

materials, combined with exaggerated silhouettes for the heroes."

The trailer tells us there was an elite international task force – soldiers, scientists, adventurers, oddities – that "restored liberty to all nations". But their watch is over, it's said, even if the ensuing shootout proves otherwise. The game will be available for PCs – though there's no release date yet – with a beta version coming in 2015.

"We're excited to finally be able to share this new universe and these awesome heroes with everyone," Bill says. "It's been great to hear the community's feedback so far, and we're looking forward to sharing even more of our work when the Overwatch beta begins next year."

To see more artwork for the upcoming game visit <http://eu.battle.net/overwatch>.

“We strove to create a handcrafted look for the materials and exaggerated silhouettes for the heroes”



Blizzard artists have been tasked with creating something new that also keeps to the company's heritage.





Lena Oxton, known to her Overwatch colleagues as Tracer, is able to teleport and pull off a passable Cockney accent.





## The Shiflett brothers

**Dynamic duo** Fantasy sculptors Brandon and Jarrod Shiflett talk clay, dentist tools and canine studio mates



Our studio is a big mash-up of practical work space and a collection of all the things that inspire us. It's important for us to keep the statues, books and images that you see here around us, to remind us why it is we do what we do.

We used to rent studio space, but now work out of our house – so we can just roll out of bed and get sculpting!

The tools of the trade are vital to us and you can see them all around us, in every direction. We use some big electrical tools for cutting pieces apart or for constructing bases, but the important tools in our arsenal are the sculpting tools.

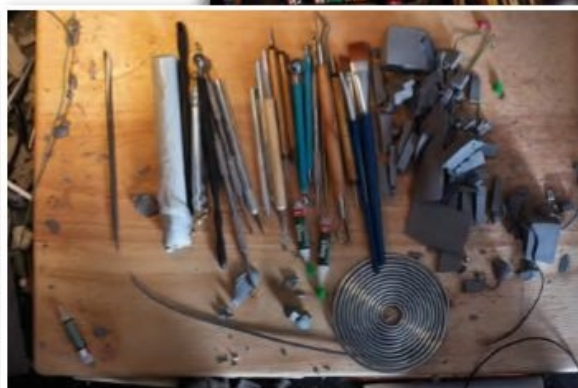
We have ball tools, loop tools, old tools given to us by dentists, and most importantly for us, a piece called a burnisher, with which we do most of our work. A large supply of watercolour paintbrushes also comes in handy for applying alcohol to smooth imperfections out of the clay and to apply petroleum jelly, which allows soft, unbaked Super Sculpture to adhere to the hard, baked stuff.

And of course, not all the cool statues in and around our studio are our work! We proudly display the work of heroes and friends of ours, including Japanese master Takayuki Takeya, Paul Komoda, Hollywood sculpting icon Jordu Schell, Bryan Wynia, Simon "Spiderzero" Lee, Missmonster, Yuji Oniki, Greek sculpting freak Aris Kolokontes, and others. We keep all the fantasy and sci-fi and classical art books we've ever collected in our studio and will turn to these for reference at a moment's notice. Studying Rodin late at night always helps!

We also collect portfolios and sketchbooks of two-dimensional artists (yes, 2D artists are artists, too!) that we look up



Simon "Spiderzero" Lee (Pacific Rim, Edge of Tomorrow) sculpted this bust of one of our characters. Simon is an old friend of ours and one of the most talented sculptors the industry has ever seen.



Different artists use differing kinds of clay – whatever works best for you. For us, that product is Super Sculpture Firm. It's a polymer clay that bakes at a pretty low temperature. You bake it, let it cool down, then continue to work on it. We love the stuff.

to, easily within reach. This group includes Claire Wendling, Travis Charest, Simon Bisley, Frank Frazetta and Moebius. If you're having a bad night, and you pull down a Moebius book... ta-dah! Instant inspiration.

Lastly, we have our studio mates (not pictured), all of the canine variety: Little Red, Scar, Hoss, Zoe, Max and Watson. They are only interested in clay if they think it's food

and we like having them around because they are never, ever critical of our work.

**Brandon and Jarrod Shiflett are comic book sculpting nerds who sculpt nerdy stuff. They live in Texas, with herds of pirate dogs, listening to Kate Bush and pondering their chances of taking over the world, one fantasy sculpture at a time. You can see more of their work at [www.shiflettbrothers.com](http://www.shiflettbrothers.com).**

A print of the work of the French sculpting witch Virginie Ropars. We are total fanboys and we hang around her booth at cons. She signed some prints to us, writing very sweet things in the margins, probably to ensure we would go away.





# Artist news, software & events

Roy Batty: because Blade Runner. Do we need to say more? We worship this film as so many other artists in our field do, in no small part because of its amazing design and art direction. Batty was the hero, right?

An original Frank Frazetta sketch, gifted to us by Spectrum publishers Cathy and Annie Fenner. We're good friends, but we were absolutely gobsmacked when we opened the package. Frazetta is a huge hero.



A Venom vs Spider-Man statue that we sculpted for Bowen Designs and Marvel Comics, based on the pin-up art of British comics legend Simon Bisley. The comic-book sculpture work we've done, particularly the Marvel work, is important to us because we grew up as comic book geeks. Comics are the reason we started sculpting in the first place.

This is the 2014 Spectrum Gold Award for Dimensional work that we won in Kansas City. We were crazy humbled and honoured to accept it. We were up against some really talented sculptors, including Forest Rogers, who is an artist we admire and sometimes strive to emulate.

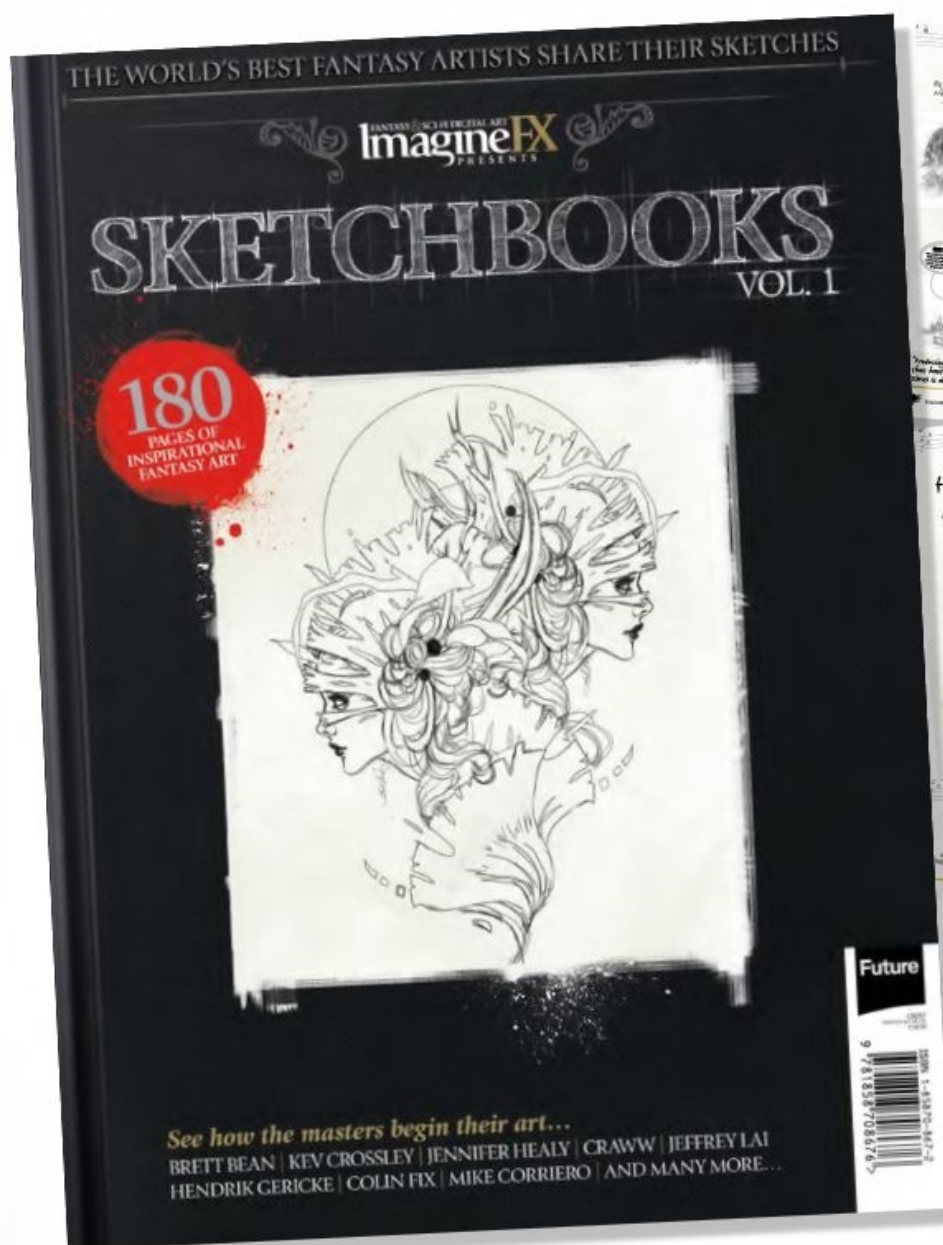




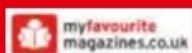


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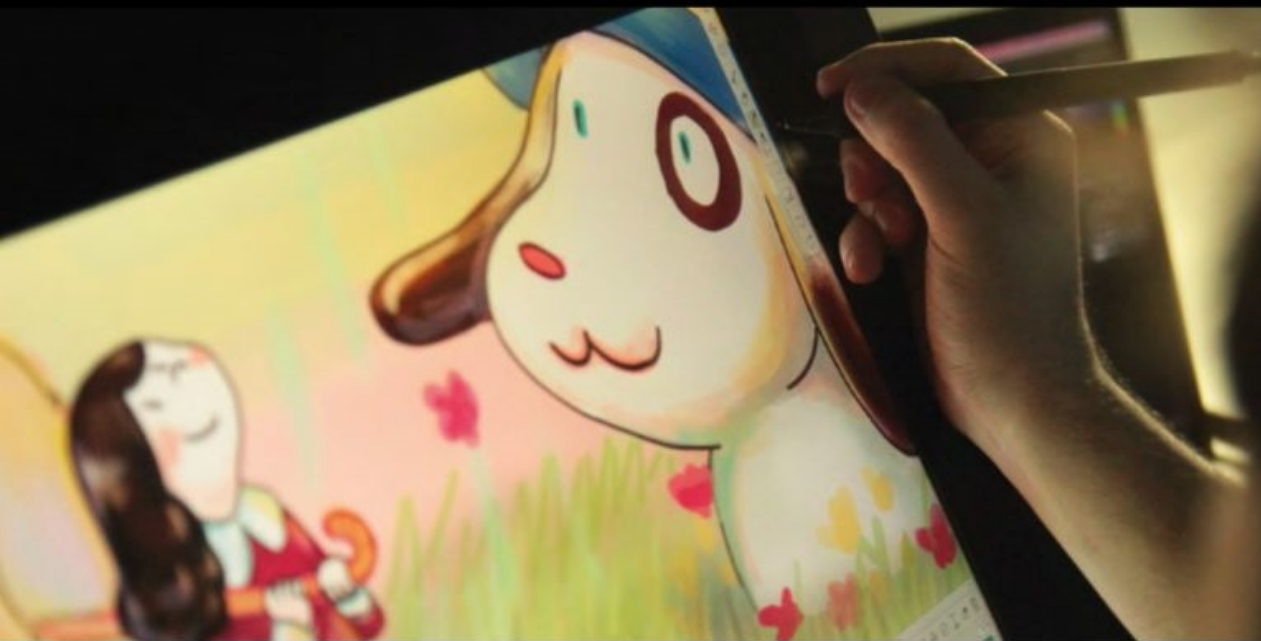
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Even more remarkable is that Mischief's superpowers are yet to be fully realised.

With the company's recent brand relaunch bringing a new vision, a new team and the support of global software developer The Foundry, you can expect more great things to come for this lean and mean application.

The newly updated Mischief now sports a gorgeous, streamlined user interface, and a completely free (and generously useful), version available for Mac and Windows. This means every digital artist can have a little Mischief in their life. Get Mischief today by heading to [www.madewithmischief.com](http://www.madewithmischief.com).

"The infinite canvas and the smooth, pixel-free, zoom are awesome," says artist David Habben.

"I love technology that gets out of the way of creating," says Gene Gonzales, a digital and traditional illustrator.



“Mischief is so intuitive. It's the first program I've used that replicates the freedom of drawing on paper”

Stephen Silver, freelance character designer and instructor at Silver Drawing Academy



# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on [claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England



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### You skipped the good bit

I wanted to express my frustration regarding the video of the cover for issue 107, which was Han-Yuan Yu's art for your manga special, back in April 2014.

The woman wears complex jewellery and a headdress. I learned that I could download the video and find out the steps the artist took to achieve those marvellously shiny and intricate items. However, when I downloaded nearly three hours of video that showed the artist creating the cover, I discovered he skipped over the parts I was interested in seeing. There were two occasions where he simply cut away, did the complex bits and then came back to the camera with the jewellery and headdress completed. I cry foul!

Please tell your artists that when they make a video that they should include every step so that I can learn from what they do. After watching the video I was in a bad mood for the whole day. It's simply not fair.

**Ron Mendricks, US**

**Claire replies** Goodness, we don't want to make anybody grumpy! Ron, I can't remember why the video was cut in this way. It certainly wasn't done on our part to annoy you. The videos are supplied by the artists and they're free to edit them as they see fit. I take your points on board, though. I'm sorry to have annoyed you.

### Cover artist?

I saw in issue 113 an invitation for artists to apply to do an ImagineFX cover. I'd like to throw my hat into the ring. I've been lucky enough to have my work featured in your FXPose section and realise that producing a cover requires a big step up in quality, so I understand if my work isn't there yet. (One day!) My portfolio can be found at <http://jobu57.wix.com/mattforsyth>. Thanks for your time.

**Matt Forsyth, via email**

**Claire replies** Matt, thanks so much for showing us your gallery. I don't think it's



Ron found the video tutorial for issue 107's cover workshop to be a disappointment.



### DID YOU MISS ISSUE 116?

Visit our shop at <http://ifxm.ag/ifxstore> for details on this edition and other special offers, too.



A couple of former FXPose artist Matt Forsyth's fantasy paintings – he's offering to paint our next cover.

right for us at this time, but that's not to say it isn't brilliant work in its own right. I particularly like your atmospheric Warstrider images. Readers, I encourage you to check out Matt's gallery.

### Digital avenues

I've been a long-time follower and collector of ImagineFX and a huge fan of all forms of digital art. I'm 53 years old and I've been drawing since I was a child. I have a degree in graphic arts and have sold a few small pieces of art, mostly pencil drawings and photographs, but I've had very limited success in the digital arts.

I live in a small mid-western town in the US and my local audience is very limited. Most older folks just don't understand what I'm doing. The local arts group is still debating whether digital art is "real" art, which leaves me on the sidelines.

I know I'll never make it in the big leagues of Hollywood or with a film studio, but I still enjoy working in the digital arts so I'd like to know if there are any realistic avenues out there for the work of an older fellow such as myself? I'm constantly amazed by the work that's being done in digital art and I have to admit a little jealousy for the younger folks who do such wonderful work.

Keep up the great work. I love the magazine and all the art makes me smile.

**Michael Ries, via email**

**Claire replies** Michael, thanks for your email. I'm sure many artists reading this will feel the same as you. As your location is – in your words – challenging, I would suggest getting your work online. There's a democracy about online galleries and groups that will help you rise above any small-town preconceptions about what art is. Perhaps you could submit your art for portfolio reviews, or travel to conventions to meet fellow artists and art directors to discuss and hone your craft?

Furthermore, do you really feel that age is a barrier to art success? I'd like to think that someone's work will stand out whatever age you are. (Am I being naïve, here? I sincerely hope not.) Good luck in your artistic pursuits.



Your art news that's grabbed our attention



**James Harren**  
**@JamesHarren1**

"Style study and concept work for Rumble. Trying to get a different look than BPRD for this book."

[http://ifxm.ag/fresh\\_james](http://ifxm.ag/fresh_james)



**veleries**  
**@veleries**

"Inking for comic."

<http://ifxm.ag/1BJmTNz>



**Sylvia Ritter**  
**@sylvia\_ritter**

"The Grand Koi Hotel" :)

[http://ifxm.ag/fresh\\_sylvia](http://ifxm.ag/fresh_sylvia)



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# Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? LET US EASE YOUR ART-ACHE AT [HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM](mailto:HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM)



## The NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX panel

### Mark Molnar



Mark is a concept and visual development artist who works for the entertainment industry, creating illustrations for international film, game and animation companies.

[www.markmolnar.com](http://www.markmolnar.com)

### Sara Forlenza



Sara creates art for book covers, cards and RPGs. After many years with traditional techniques, she was introduced to digital art. It was love at first sight.

[www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com](http://www.saraforlenza.deviantart.com)

### David Braggalla



Dave is a graphic designer and illustrator from Stockholm who works both digitally and traditionally. He recently organised the Northern Light Workshop series.

[www.pixelhuset.se](http://www.pixelhuset.se)

### Jonathan Standing



Jonathan is an illustrator and concept artist. He paints environments and characters, and generates visual effects sequences for Syfy's popular series Defiance.

[www.jonathanstanding.tumblr.com](http://www.jonathanstanding.tumblr.com)

### Tony Foti



Tony is a freelance illustrator living in California who creates art for books, card and video games, and Fantasy Flight Games' Star Wars and Lord of the Rings lines.

[www.tonyfotiart.com](http://www.tonyfotiart.com)

## Artist Q&A Need our advice?

Email [help@imaginefx.com](mailto:help@imaginefx.com) with your art questions and we'll provide all the answers!



**Question**  
Can you help me paint chrome in 2D please?  
*Barry Carter, England*

## Answer Mark replies



The key for painting chrome is the same as for any other reflective surface: you need to paint the reflections realistically. Chrome acts almost like a perfect mirror, and it reflects everything in its surroundings. Therefore, the main point to keep in mind is to show what's behind the camera in the reflections.

Because chrome won't reflect all the lighting in a scene, the reflection is going to be between 10 and 15 per cent darker in value, but crucially it's going to keep roughly the same colour temperature as the original. The sky is still going to be blue, but it's going to be slightly darker in the reflection and you also have to think about how the sky could look like behind the viewer.

You also have to keep in mind the location of the light source – or sources – and that the light has to appear in the

Notice how the chrome surface of the alien object reflects the environment behind the camera, as well as what the viewer can see.

appropriate section and direction of the reflective surface. Chrome surfaces work best if you vary them with other non-reflective materials, such as matte metals or organic matter. These can create a pleasing contrast to the high-tech chrome surface and strengthen the visual interest of your piece.

## Artist's secret

### DOUBLE REFLECTIONS



Some of the surfaces are going to reflect back each other's image as well, not just the surroundings. These double reflections are what can make your creations look even more realistic.



## Step-by-step: Quickly create chrome surfaces



**1** After a quick line drawing, I block in the main colours and reflections of the chrome surfaces, keeping in mind the background that I'm planning to use. I start with the sky colour as a base and try to find the middle line of the curved surfaces, where the ground plane meets the sky in the reflections.



**2** I use one of my old photos as a background, match all the colour and values of the chrome creature to the surroundings and then start balancing out the edges. I tighten up the reflections as well. Adding sharper edges to reflective surfaces always help to suggest a highly polished material.



**3** To finish, I add extra textures to give all the materials a much more realistic feel. I use some photo textures of real-world machines to add more details to the interior of the object, and distort elements of the surroundings to match the perspective of the curved surfaces of the mechanical craft... or is it a life-form?!

## Question

Can you help me draw a person running through a crowd?

Steve Adams, US



## Answer

Sara replies



I decide to paint a roguish male thief running through a crowd. It's important to set the scene in a functional way. Using a perspective view from below means that I can suggest the presence of a crowd in a simpler way, by just using a few visual hints.

I choose the centre of the image as the focus of the action, where I'm going to draw my running hero. This usually makes the picture less dynamic, but I can balance this by tilting the perspective plane.

I lay down a fast sketch while bearing in mind the character's pose, his anatomy and dynamism of his body language. He needs to look as natural as possible; a forced pose can reduce the impact of this action-orientated composition.

Once I'm satisfied with my hero, I sketch the surroundings and begin to draw hints of a crowd around him, always keeping in mind the perspective. I add part of an arm and a hand in the foreground. This informs the viewer that the crowd exists beyond the edges of the scene, and, perhaps more importantly, immerses them in the action.

When I feel that there are enough elements in my drawing, I finish it with some crucial details, such as the cloak and hair fluttering in the wind, giving the feeling of dynamic movement. When choosing colours I leave his cloak and hair undefined, which I think emphasises the speed of my thief. And to make the crowd appear lost in the distance, I paint them in with a colour that appears in the background.



I start by painting the hero of the picture. That helps to give him more relevance in the scene.

## Artist's secret

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE AERIAL PERSPECTIVE



Focusing details on the protagonists of the scene helps to guide the viewer's eye through the crowds. I reduce the level of details as I move further away from the centre of the action. I do the same with the colours, reducing their intensity.



## Question

How can I depict underwater bubbles realistically?

Reggie MacDougal, Scotland

## Answer

Mark replies



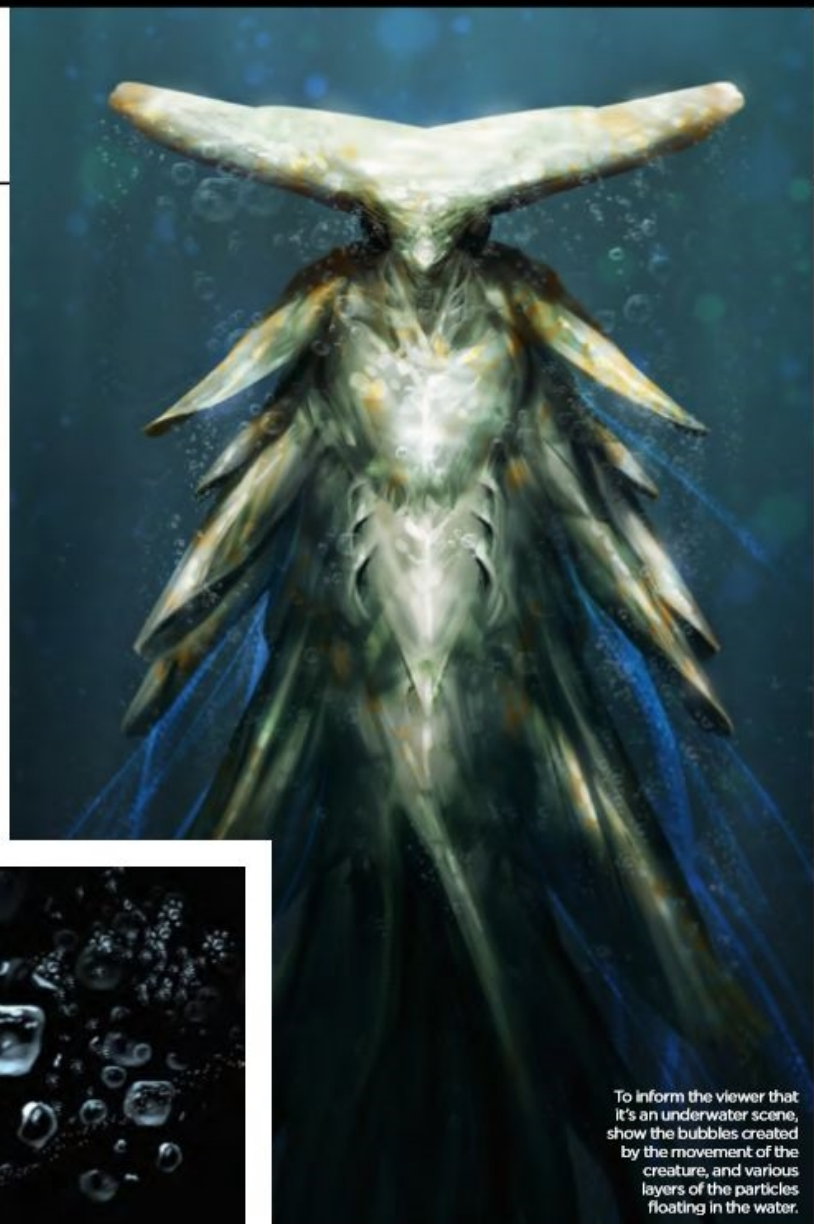
To make the bubbles look convincing in this image I decide to create a realistic-looking environment, which also helps balance out the abstract creature. I avoid depicting underwater rocks, ruins or vegetation, because I want to keep the image as simple as possible. However, this means I'm obliged to put extra effort into painting the water, so the viewer instantly understands that it's an aquatic scene.

After blocking in the creature and establishing its main shape and value structure, I introduce scattered lights coming from the water's surface. I add blurred light shafts in the background to help sell the lights on the creature's body.

The key for painting underwater scenes is to show the inverted aerial perspective (the scene becomes darker as it shifts from the foreground to the background), as well as particles and bubbles. I paint a group of bubbles on a new layer and sample it with a Mixer Brush. I increase Angle Jitter and Scattering in the Shape Dynamics dialog, which enables me to paint random clusters of bubbles. It only takes me five minutes to paint all the bubbles. It would have taken me hours to paint them one by one!

As a finishing touch, I add multiple layers of small particles (scattered dots) to the image, using Overlay and Color Dodge layers. I blur them slightly to add an extra level of depth to the scene.

Using the Mixer Brush tool you can vary the size, shape and orientation of the bubbles. Play around with the different options, such as Shape Dynamics and Scattering, to achieve the best possible results.



To inform the viewer that it's an underwater scene, show the bubbles created by the movement of the creature, and various layers of the particles floating in the water.



I can add an even more realistic effect by changing the size of the brush and combining elements of small and large glitter.

## Question

I need help painting glitter on my princess character. Can you help?

Nigella Limpar, US

## Answer

Sara replies



The task of painting glitter can be made easier if you study photo references first. Doing so will reveal that glitter is nothing but a collection of small flat dots made of a polished material. They can have different colours and shapes, and once applied to the skin and clothes they reflect any light that's shined on them. The trick is to bring attention to this visual effect in the image.

For the example I choose to draw a frost fairy princess, which suits the glitter theme down to the ground! Glitter can be added towards the end of the painting process, so

I paint the skin of my character and the details as I would normally. To stay true to the icy setting, I choose to represent simple transparent or silver glitter. However, I can easily alter its colour by adding a Color or Overlay layer over it.

I place glitter on the face, arms and legs of my character. I ensure that it follows the shape of the face and body, and increase its brightness when it's hit by light, and make it transparent or dark when in the shadows of the frost fairy princess area. This can be done simply and effectively by using an Overlay layer.





## Question

What's a good way to conceptualising an original fantasy humanoid?

Gerry Leyland, US



## Answer

Dave replies



Inventing new humanoids is great fun, but an awareness of real-world creatures and anatomies can make them much more convincing.

I recently came across Dunkleosteus, a powerful armoured fish from the Late Devonian period with a beak-like arrangement of bone blades in place of teeth. Dunkleosteus had a great face, so I consider how to adapt it into a

humanoid. Predators tend to have forward-facing eyes, while prey have widely spaced vision on the sides of their heads. For my new Dunkeloid, I set the eyes slightly apart, but still forward-facing. Dunkleosteus even had armoured eye rings, which look very striking on my new chap! I narrow the wide jaw plates to create more of a chin effect.

With the powerful jaw mechanism that Dunkleosteus possessed, I figure that Dunkeloid would have massive jaw musculature. However, to introduce some vulnerability to the character, I look at the long necks of tortoises. Using softer, thinner neck folds creates textural contrast to all that bone and carapace, and I use tortoise-inspired patterns across the shoulders.

By borrowing interesting ideas from these two actual creatures, my new fantasy character now has more believability. Take a look into the less-travelled corners of the animal world, and let yourself be inspired by the unusual denizens waiting there!



A Dunkleosteus skull at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane. The fish had unbelievable jaw power, and could bite through bone.



My humanoid version of a large, imposing prehistoric armoured fish is now able to wear a hat or drive a car!

## Artist's secret

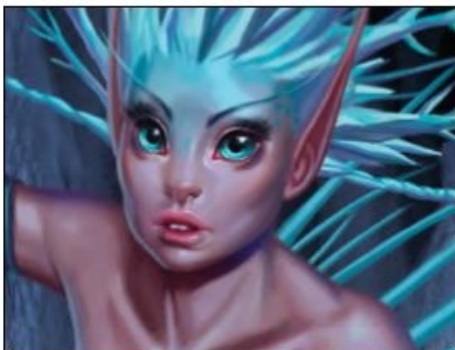
MAKE A MAQUETTE!

Making a small maquette (scale model) of an idea for a creature can give you good reference for lighting, as well as helping you better understand the three-dimensional form you're imagining. A kneaded eraser is perfect for a quickie sculpt!

Turn to page 106

and discover how James Gurney constructs his maquettes!

## Step-by-step: Painting perfect glitter



**1** Once I've finished painting my frost fairy princess's skin complexion, I take note of the areas that are affected by the strong light source by her foot and those that are in shadow. I create a new layer just above the skin one and I set it to Overlay.



**2** I select a Round brush, set Hardness to 60-70 per cent and the Spacing to 130-140 per cent. I put the Opacity Jitter and Flow Jitter on Pen Pressure and add Scattering. I now start painting glitter with a range of grey shades, depending on the light and shadows of the face.



**3** By setting the level to Overlay, greys will interact with the skin of the character, darkening and brightening like typical dots of silver glitter. As a finishing step I select with a Hard-edged brush and add some strong light hits here and there, to emphasise the sparkle.





## Question

## How do I create perspective guides in Photoshop?

Tony Winterburn, England

## Answer

Jonathan replies



There are probably a dozen or so ways to go about making perspective tools for yourself in Photoshop. The following method has worked well for me in that it's flexible, editable and makes use of a toolset that's similar to Adobe's Illustrator.

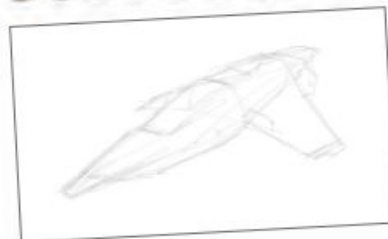
Other programs have some nifty perspective tools built in (particularly SketchBook Pro) and later versions of Photoshop may have addressed this need, but the following use of the Pen tool and Paths can be applied to almost any version of the software, regardless of its vintage.

What you create with the Pen tool is equivalent to making vanishing points on paper, with their corresponding guides, zooming away to their respective point. However, making them in Photoshop makes them considerably more flexible.

Knowing that the Pen tool can create points with connecting lines without generating pixels is the key to this method. Additionally, understanding the difference between the black selection arrow (for selecting whole paths) and the white selection arrow (for selecting the constituent parts of a path) is essential.



This ship design is pretty basic, but the volumes and angles are more or less correct, thanks to the use of the Pen tool.

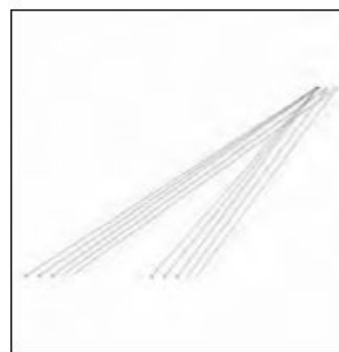


## Artist's secret

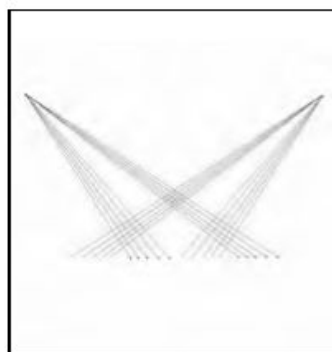
### ESTABLISHING 3D SPACE

I need to attempt 3D space first before 'correcting' it. I sketch out what I want and then, after creating my guides, I fix my perspective and find out how far I was from being accurate with my freehand attempt.

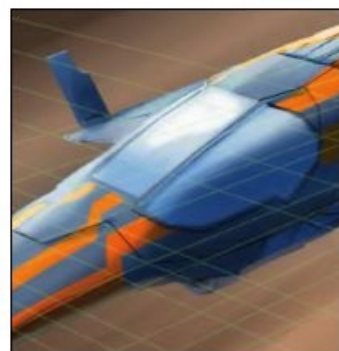
## Step-by-step: Ensure you have correct perspective



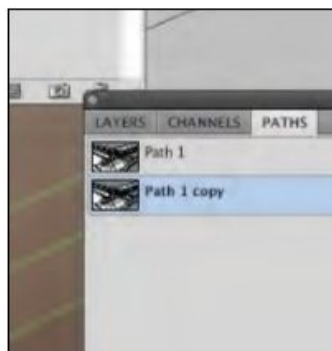
- 1 To begin, I create open-ended triangles and consolidate their top-most points into one point. By clicking and dragging with the white arrow (otherwise known as Photoshop's Direct Selection tool), I can drag the grouped points to where my first vanishing point would be. Doing so enables me to establish my composition's horizon or eyeline.



- 2 Duplicate the first set of paths that I created and then, using the Direct Selection tool again, I select all of the top-most points. By holding down the Shift key, I ensure that I translate them horizontally, keeping them constrained to my horizon line. This, in turn, gives my composition its second point of perspective that I can now follow as I begin painting.



- 3 I use the white selection arrow to manipulate the paths to act as guides, drawing underneath them. However, if your paths are visible and you attempt to transform something, Photoshop will try to transform the paths. One solution is to stroke the paths into a new layer, giving you your lines of perspective in pixels that can be made semi-opaque by adjusting the Transparency.



- 4 Paths can be assigned a name and then duplicated in the Paths window. Should you need vanishing points for an object that's neither parallel nor perpendicular to your initial object, then one solution is to duplicate the paths and then slide the two vanishing points horizontally across the horizon line. This adjusts the guides to their new application in your composition.



## Question

Can you explain how to paint strong light sources in a dark environment?

Kathryn Miller, England



The concept of lost edges is useful in all kinds of paintings, but absolutely crucial in torch-lit scenes.

## Answer

Tony replies



For this illustration I've made the two torches the only light source affecting the main figure, mostly to avoid any confusion about what light is coming from where. If the scene were in a city at night, for instance, then the ambient light from the buildings would illuminate the figure more.

When there's just one light, though, any area on the figure that isn't close to the flame and unobstructed will be so dark it becomes one with the background. If the edges of unlit sections were visible it wouldn't make sense; the feeling of mystery created by only letting the viewer see a few key parts of the scene builds drama.

To figure out where the light would hit, imagine little arrows shooting off in



Anything more than a few feet from a torch won't be very illuminated by it, although you can increase the intensity of the light for dramatic purposes.

perfectly straight lines in every direction from the flame. Each place the arrows touch (near the flame) will be lit up, and every spot that the arrows can't reach will blend into the background. As for how lit a given object will be, it's important to know that illumination from fire has a high drop-off rate.

## Artist's secret

### HALOS OF LIGHT

Because fire tends to give off smoke, the area around a flame usually has a halo of light around it. You can achieve this effect by duplicating the layer you painted the fire on and then playing around with Gaussian Blur.



## Question

How can I give my sky greater depth?

Leyla Dixon, England



Layering one body of cloud on top of another is a great way to suggest volume in an expansive outdoors scene.

## Answer

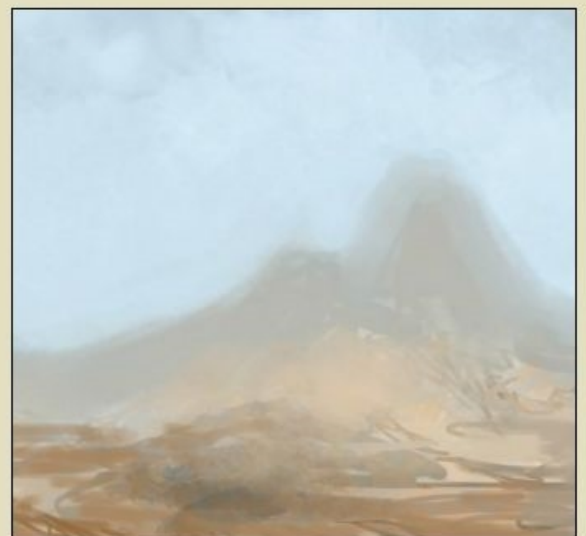
Jonathan replies



It's easy for the sky in an image to take on a two-dimensional quality, where it appears to be one large, flat volume. While this may be suitable for some images, sometimes it's advantageous to be able to accentuate the perspective and illusion of depth in your image, through the sky as well as the ground.

A useful way to help push your sky further in Photoshop is to leverage layers and use the Transform tool. By constructing your file in such a way that the sky is in a separate layer, you can apply either Warp or Perspective to your sky from the Transform tool menu. By tweaking clouds, or any other volume you have in the sky, you can establish a base perspective you can then paint into.

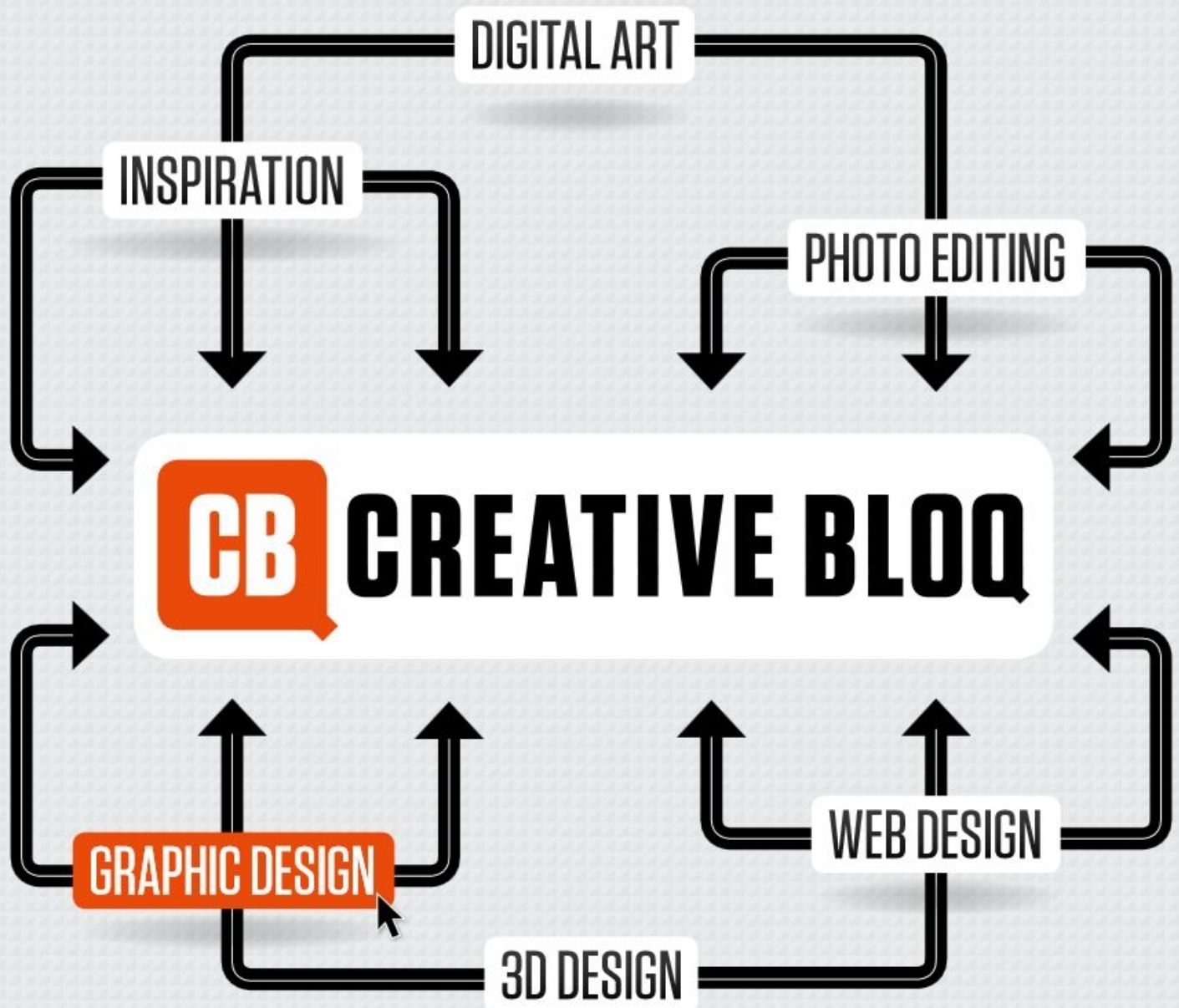
It's worth keeping in mind two other rules of thumb: atmospheric perspective applies to clouds as well as the ground. Clouds become more blue the further they are from the viewer, so having more than one colour in the base gradient you use for your sky is advantageous. Take a look at a blue sky: there's more than one colour and tone at play.



Reducing the detail in your sky towards the horizon line reflects how our eyes interpret detail at a distance and also helps your image be less busy.



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## Question

Could you show me how to paint a realistic armoured character?

Max Casjens, Germany



## Answer

Tony replies



Painting armour is all about light and how it reflects off the metal plates. When you look at characters in polished, shining armour, those highlights are all reflections of the environment around them. If the surface is buffed to a mirror sheen, it's basically like taking an actual mirror and bending it around the wearer. Sky, trees, the person pointing the camera and anything else around can all be found in the reflections. It is for this reason, though, that light doesn't fall across polished metal the same way that it does on most surfaces.

If you place a lamp above a mannequin in cotton robes, the portions of the cloth that face the light will be the brightest. With a polished helmet, however, the brightest point won't be on top, but at the exact point where the light reflects off the steel and back towards your eyes.



Increasing the intensity of the highlights, shadows and sharp edges will make the armour appear more polished. Lowering the contrast makes it seem dull.



Imagine shooting an imaginary laser or anti-gravity billiard ball off the helmet to hit the lamp. You wouldn't want to graze the top, because then it would just glance off at almost the same angle and end up far behind the armour. Shoot it straight forward, and it'll bounce back towards you. Aim between the top and the straightforward position, though, and you'll have an angle the bounces right up towards the light. That's the spot where the lamp's reflection will be, and where you should place the highlight. The colour, shape and intensity of the reflection will all match the light source if it's standard silver plate mail.

If you imagine the armour as a collection of bent mirrors attached to each other, you'll have a good starting point.

## Artist's secret

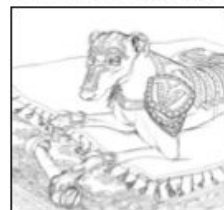
### EDGE LIGHT

When a reflective surface bends on armour, the edge faces significantly more directions than the rest of the metal. As such, they're prone to highlights. That doesn't mean you should rim light every inch, but if a bend faces light, paint it.



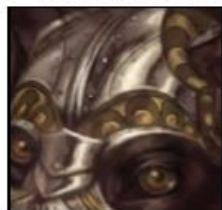
## Step-by-step: Depict the intricacies of armour

- 1 When painting from life or with perfect photo reference, it makes sense to figure out the details as you go. When designing armour, though, I suggest a thorough sketch first. If the line work is



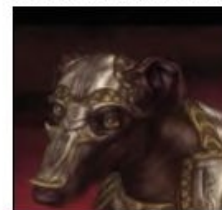
tight enough, you can even use some of it in the finished painting. Just be sure to work the drawing into the illustration so it doesn't stand out.

- 2 One aspect of rendering armour that differs from most is the sharp transitions between high and low values. Instead of having light and shadow areas, reflections on polished metal create high



contrast all over the place. Seeing bright highlights peppered among dark shadows is a cue to the human eye that it's looking at something reflective.

- 3 Combining the properties of a mirror reflection and the way light hits cotton is how you find the middle ground for semi-polished armour. The duller the surface, the more diffused highlights will



be across it. You wouldn't be able to make out reflections of the environment in only slightly shiny armour, but the highlight will still be on the top.

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# Alex Ross

His strong understanding of form and light, and a passion for “drawin’ good” has elevated the comic art form to new heights





Alex Ross' break into comics was short lived. Having teamed up with writer Kurt Busiek to illustrate a story for *Open Space*, the series died before Alex's piece got printed. Retreating back to his steady advertising job, he could at least console himself that he got paid this time.

Sitting on the fringes of the comic industry gave both men time to bounce ideas for a new project around and find something worthy of their talents. In 1994

they released *Marvels* to resounding acclaim, and Alex swiftly became one of the most sought-after comic artists around.

At the core of *Marvels* was the human, very un-super perspective of news photographer Phil Sheldon, as he observed the birth of superheroes, starting with the Human Torch in 1939. "Alex's art made superheroes feel so real and believable that it seemed wrong to waste that on a straight action story," says Kurt today. "It had to be something about seeing these guys as ➤

#### AVENGERS

*This canvas painting, which stretches 19x38 inches, could be yours for a mere \$45,000, straight from Alex's website.*

### Artist PROFILE

#### Alex Ross



Alex made his name in comics in 1994 with *Marvels*, and became one of the greatest cover artists of all time, but he's also painted interiors for his most famous titles *Kingdom*

*Come* (1996) *Earth X* (1999–2000), and *Justice* (2005–07).

[www.alexrossart.com](http://www.alexrossart.com)





© DC Comics

## SUPERMAN

Alex's favourite: he's admitted to being "heartbroken" after DC decided to move Superman's style away from his.

## SPIDEY

Growing up, Spider-Man was Alex's favourite superhero to draw, and he later worked on Sam Raimi's movies.

© Marvel

➤ ordinary people would, seeing them as if they were real." And if you want to depict 'real', Alex is your man.

Although he would become known for his monumental, larger-than-life iconic covers of superheroes, Alex's introduction to art had more to do with Phil Sheldon than Superman. Like the ever-observing photographer, Alex studied the superheroes of the art world in his mother's library, shunning the company of other kids to spend more time learning the pencil and charcoal teachings of Andrew Loomis. Not

that the books' appeal was restricted to the noble pursuit of great artistry. "They were also one of the few places you could see attractive women drawn without their clothes on!" reasons Alex. Along the way he grew to love Andrew's brand of anatomically accurate drawing. "That was my genesis."

Through these books, Alex came to think of realism as the highest point of artistic achievement. This year he's had the chance to pay tribute to the past master that aided him in that discovery, writing the introduction to Andrew's 1959 all but

## UNCANNY X-MEN

This variant cover was painted for Marvel's 75th anniversary series.

complete, yet unpublished, manuscript I'd Love to Draw! (see page 97 for our review). Working from his teacher's original notes to fill in unfinished sections, Alex is keen to make clear that teaching has never really appealed to him. "I'd rather just make sure I have no competitors."

## QUIETLY CONFIDENT

Taking his childhood love of the golden age of American illustration into comics was always his aim. Andrew Loomis, Norman Rockwell and 'Dean of Illustrators' Al Parker were in on it, and if some comic fans weren't familiar with their work, it didn't lessen the impact of Alex's art in Marvels, Kingdom Come and Astro City. Yet in the proceeding 20 years the artist has been hesitant to bask in the limelight, giving few interviews, talking sparingly about his passions and processes. "I can be very loquacious if I want to be," he insists, "but I've often found that the way I communicate about stuff doesn't often translate to other people understanding



## UNDER THE SEA, OVER THE MOON

Alex recalls seeing one of his favourite paintings hanging in his travelling exhibition...

"I got to see this piece in person, which Andrew Loomis did for the Titan book *Creative Illustration*. It's called *Underwater Fantasies* (1946) that I think he started as a test illustration for his art book. First it was a charcoal drawing of a nude woman sitting on a swing, then he did the final elaboration of it as this oil painting. It's one of the most startling, ethereal images of a woman. I got to see this piece in person when it was loaned by the Loomis family for my exhibit, *Heroes and Villains*, that was recently at the Andy Warhol museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is now travelling the country.

"I've also taken such inspiration from that image that I've stuck it into my work before. When I was drawing the story *Kingdom Come*, and I depicted Atlantis, I showed a mermaid that was at least my extrapolation of Andrew's. It's about as close as he got to fantasy."



**UNDERWATER FANTASIES**

Alex has studied Andrew Loomis's drawings since he was a child, and loves his "ethereal" painting style.

© Titan Books / © Jennifer Loomis



© DC Comics

me. So I can't assume that I have that golden tongue to communicate to the masses." Better leave the art talk for itself.

Alex sees another parallel between his work and that of his favourite illustrators. "My time has arguably come and gone. I'm

**"I'd like to think that the little part that I got to do with these characters presents them with the weight of their years"**

officially a has-been in my medium," he half-jokes of his gouache paintings and computer illiteracy. "I'm one of those cantankerous old farts who complains about how everything is different to the way that it ought to be. The marketplace is saying: 'Everybody has to be young and pretty.' Really?! Everybody?!"

Alex isn't shy to take a chunk out of the hand that feeds him. "A lot of the intent is redesign and reinvent for a modern readership," he says, "but there's a beautiful eloquence in connecting with something that was designed 50, 60, 75 years ago and

that remains undiluted. They don't need to be over-altered for the sake of upcoming generations. If you have to always make characters younger because 'young people won't connect with older protagonists,' that's such horse shit! It's a company credo that's the laziest part of the way they do business. But we're going to keep seeing that

### BATMAN 66

Painting a cover for Kevin Smith's *Batman '66 Meets the Green Hornet*, this is a rare retro take for Alex.

happen with the way they tell artists how to draw. I'd like to think that the little part that I got to do with these characters presents them with the weight of their years."

### THE KISS OF LIFE

He's done more than that. With successful exhibitions in the Norman Rockwell and Andy Warhol museums, and his original comic art canvases regularly selling for thousands of dollars, he's followed a long tradition of blurring the lines between commercial and fine art. Not that you'd exactly compare him to a pop artist. "There was a tongue-in-cheek aspect to adapting comic images and allying them to fine art," says Alex of the work of Warhol and his contemporary Lichtenstein, "while, what I do, there's no tongue in cheek. There's no cynicism to it. I've tried taking the





ImagineFX  
LEGEND



# ALEX ROSS

## UNCANNY X-MEN

In 2008 Marvel asked Alex to create this epic cover for the 500th issue of Uncanny X-Men.



© Marvel

January 2015 **ImagineFX**







# BACK TO THE FUTURE

In 2014 Alex was asked by Marvel to create new cover art for its official Star Wars comic.



48

ImagineFX January 2015

© Marvel



## REVISITING A CLASSIC TALE

This recent cover art shows the artist in fine form, as he portrays characters in a galaxy far, far away...

This is Alex's painted variant for the new Marvel Star Wars series, paying homage to the first Star Wars comic cover Marvel published in 1977, created by artist Howard Chaykin.

This time around Alex will share covers with fellow artists J Scott Campbell, Joe Quesada and many more. He's also turned to the Dark Side to paint a Darth Vader cover that will adorn a comic written by Kieron Gillen, with Salvador Larroca doing the art inside. The series is set after the events of Star Wars: Episode IV A New Hope.



**SINISTER SIX**  
Spidey gets in a sticky situation with Doctor Octopus, Vulture, Electro, Kraven the Hunter, Mysterio and Sandman in this 26x33-inch artwork from 2013.

© Marvel



**MARVELOUS**  
This is Alex's 2003 Marvel Encyclopedia painting that features nearly all the Marvel characters. It's one of the artist's several best-selling reproduced images.



**EL CAP**  
This is a recent 2014 Classic Cap, also part of the 75th anniversary celebrations for Marvel.

© Marvel

“I’ve been given the rope to make projects with abundant freedom, and in some ways that way can lie madness”

➤ history of 20th century illustration, bring it to the medium that had been in a cartoon ghetto, and applying a lot of those approaches to realism and painted styles that look and feel like you had the Loomis's and the Rockwell's applying their skills to these characters and concepts." It's more than just helping comics 'grow up' though. "If you use realism to only illustrate real things, then you're not using it to its greatest reach. Apply realism to something fantastic and you've brought that thing to life."

Living in this fantasy world, you can get too close to your creations. "I've been given the rope to make projects with abundant freedom, and in some ways that way can lie madness," says Alex, "because if you start thinking that your version of a thing is the most popular version, you get it in your

head, then when [the comic companies] go a different way, as they have with Superman, it breaks your heart and makes you think that everything you did wasn't appreciated. So, you gotta calm down. That's the lesson I'm trying to absorb."

### DEVIL IN THE DETAIL

Surprisingly, for an artist who's made his reputation on solid draftsmanship enriched with detail, Alex is worried about today's art trends. "I often refer to today's expanded detailed palette as being a fussy period of design," he says. "I'm not negating or dismissing it as far as rendering goes, but often when people approach designing costumes and things, if you get up close you see an infinite amount of little tiny details, and that almost becomes visual noise."

The great realist hasn't been immune to criticism himself. Where some see totemic homages to childhood heroes, others see stiff, stationary super-slabs. He's also run the risk of making a name for reimagining lesser-known heroes, such as Green Hornet and Vamparella.

His old pal, for one, would love to see the artist strike out by himself. "If he did something new, people would pay attention," says Kurt. Alex did design new characters for Astro City, but, "I bug him every now and then to do something of his own," he says, "because who wants to go through a whole career and wind up owning almost nothing you've done?"

True, he may not own any of his beloved characters, but Alex's illustrative style remains all his own. ●



## Claire Wendling

The comic artist shares her sketchbook that's full of childlike wonder... and lots of animals!

### Artist PROFILE

**Claire Wendling**

COUNTRY: France

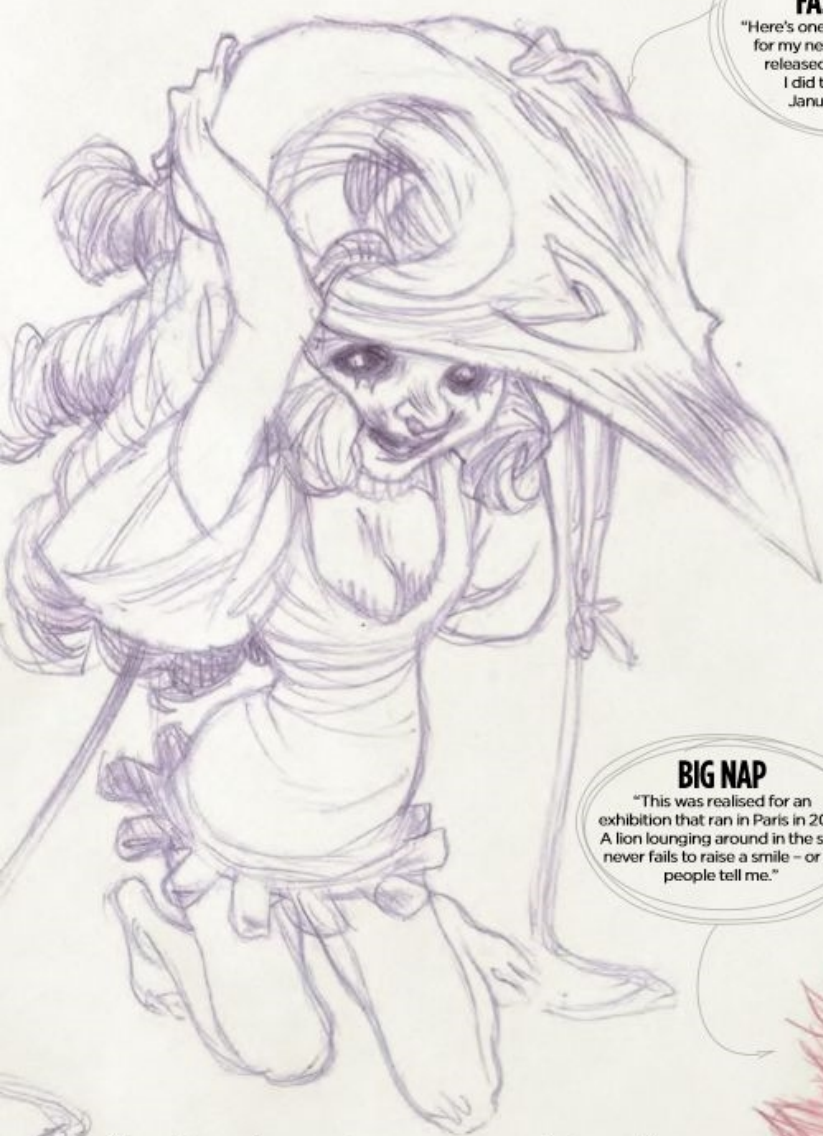


Claire lives in the French region Angoulême, in the south-west of the country. Having started in comics with the award-winning

Les Lumières de l'Amalou and Garance series, she moved on to producing artbooks and then on to animated films. In 2013 Claire suffered ill health and put her art on hold, but she has since returned to her work.  
[www.claire-wendling.net](http://www.claire-wendling.net)

#### TINY FASHION

"Here's one of the drawings for my next sketchbook, released soon I hope. I did this back in January 2014."



#### MATTER OF SHOES

"A personal sketch that I did just for fun, some time last year."



#### BIG NAP

"This was realised for an exhibition that ran in Paris in 2011. A lion lounging around in the sun never fails to raise a smile – or so people tell me."



"A lion lounging around in the sun never fails to raise a smile – or so people tell me"



### CAMEL PAL

"Here's a drawing from 2012 that I eventually posted on Facebook, for the special attention of a friend who likes camels."



### GRUMPY FACES

"Here's one more drawing that I did a while back from my next retrospective sketchbook. Cheer up, guys!"



### OUR BIG BUDDY

"Personal sketch, for fun and for training. I wanted the passengers' wavy hair to reinforce the fact that it's an underwater environment."





# Sketchbook

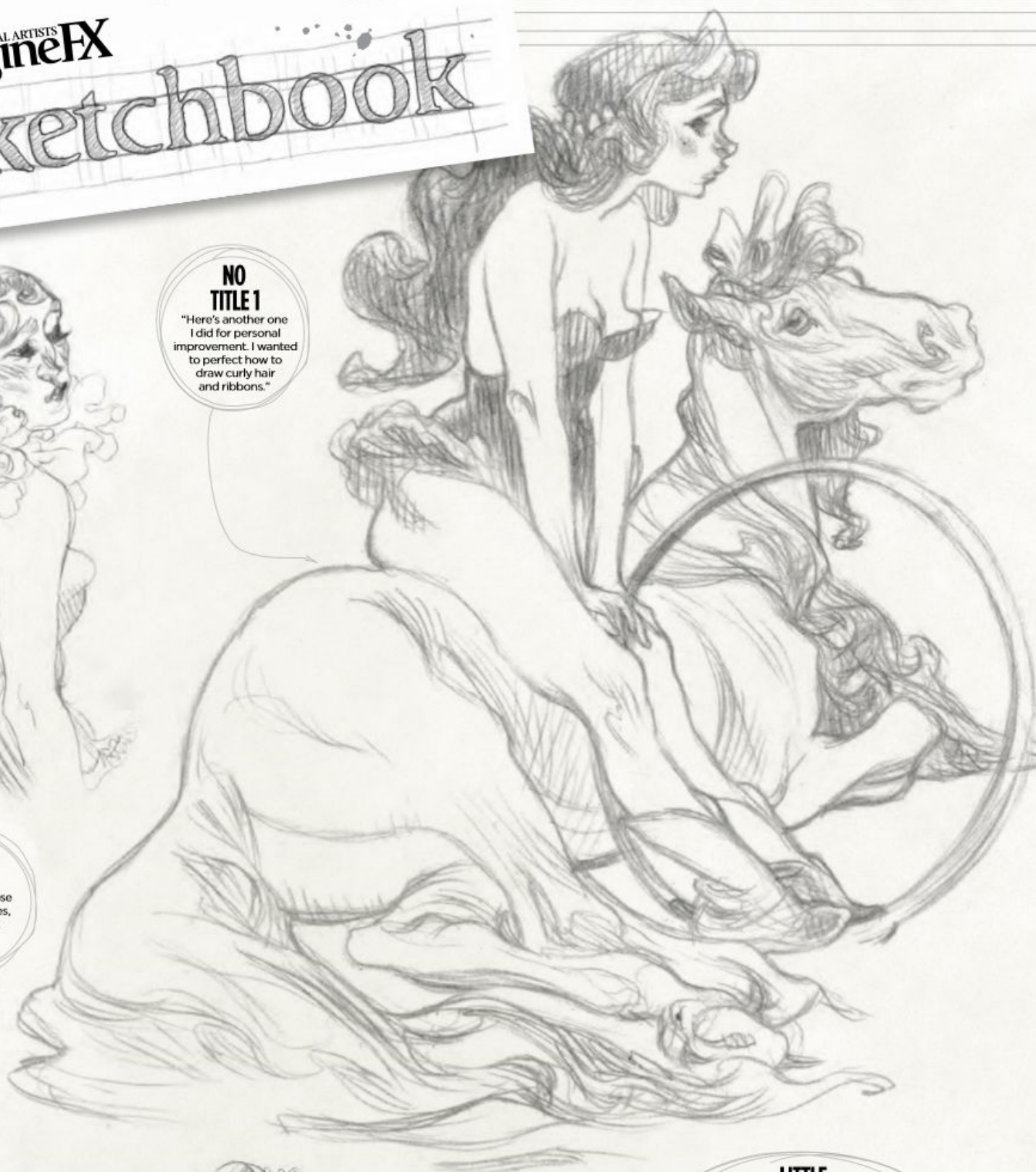
## NO TITLE 1

"Here's another one I did for personal improvement. I wanted to perfect how to draw curly hair and ribbons."



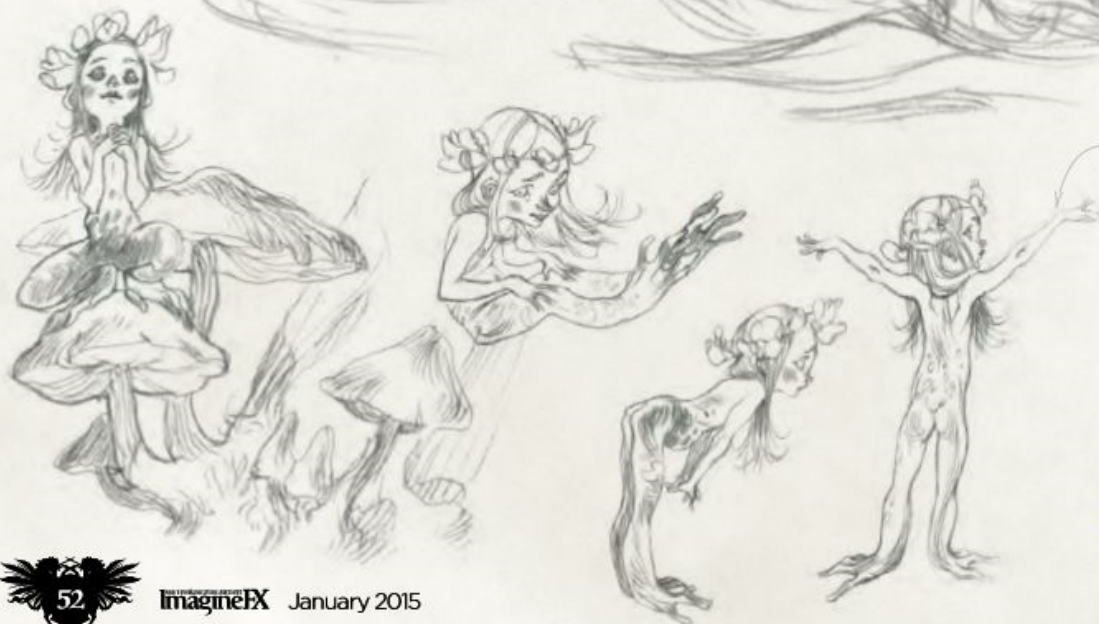
## DAISY DAISY

"This is a really loose sketch from Daisies, which is a book collection of my work."



## LITTLE FLY PRINCESS

"Another sketch from Daisies. It's from 2010, and I think I've improved as an artist during this time."



"Who wouldn't want to do the daily commute while riding a rabbit?"



### RABBIT RIDE

"And here's another one from Daisies. Who wouldn't want to do the daily commute while riding a rabbit?"

### ALONE IN THE DARK

"Something I did for the game Alone in the Dark 4 back in 1999 - research for the creatures."

### TURTLE BEACH

"Personal drawing for training - my first big one since falling ill. I completed it in September 2013."

Want to share your sketches? Email us with a selection of your artwork, to [sketchbook@imaginefx.com](mailto:sketchbook@imaginefx.com)  
NEXT MONTH'S SKETCHBOOK: CHARLIE BOWATER







**AVENGERS VS X-MEN**  
A double-page spread from issue five of *Axis*, which brings together the Avengers and the X-Men, inked by Terry's wife Rachel.



TITLE

The art of

APPROVED

ARTIST

# TERRY DODSON

How the comic art legend is having fun and doing things his way, after 22 years spent drawing superheroes...



**BLACK CAT**  
This variant cover featuring Black Cat and Deadpool, was for the *Amazing Spider-Man* 2014 series, issue one.

here comes a time in the career of every hard-working comic book artist when they deserve to have a little fun. For Terry Dodson, with 22 years in the industry and series featuring The X-Men, Wonder Woman and Spider-Man under his belt, lately he's been doing just that.

First case in point: this Halloween, the General Mills cereal Count Chocula featured the character as drawn by Terry on its box. The company had approached DC Comics to produce a special series of pieces and Terry's work was on the shelves next to Jim Lee's Boo Berry and Dave Johnson's Franken Berry.

"What a blast to do," enthuses Terry. "I got to work in a very cartoony style, which is fun and easy for me to do, and

I was drawing something from my childhood that everyone knows. It was very cool. What's funny is that while working on it, Rachel, my wife and inker, kept talking about wanting to eat some."

Another example is Terry's recent alternative cover for *Wonder Woman* issue 34, out in August. The artwork features Wonder Woman taking a selfie with a Greek statue. Again, it was by DC's suggestion – the selfie series of alternate



# ARTIST TIP

## DRAW BEYOND THE LOOKS

"To improve your skills drawing convincing pin-up girl images, you need to give your drawings character and personality. She's more than just a pretty face. Figure out what's on her mind and then express it."

☐ SHOT FOR COLOUR  
☐ SHOT FOR CODE

### HEY PRINCESS

Terry's artwork for the cover of *Star Wars: Princess Leia*, the new *Star Wars* book that he's drawing for Marvel.



© Marvel

## TERRY DODSON VITAL STATISTICS

"I'm a huge fan of pin-up work"

**Year of birth:**  
1971.

**Location:**  
Portland,  
Oregon, US.

**Most inspiring  
traditional artist:**  
John Singer  
Sargent.

**Most inspiring  
comic artist:**  
Claire Wendling.



**Favourite  
breakfast cereal:**  
Count Chocula.  
**Favourite tool  
for drawing**  
Zig Cartoonist  
Mangaka Flexible  
Marker Pen.  
**Best band:**  
Future Islands.

**Web address:**  
[www.terrydodsonart.com](http://www.terrydodsonart.com)

“I’m not stereotyped by my employers and I feel very comfortable working in a range of stories, genres and characters”

» covers included Superman by Neil Edwards and Justice League by Dale Eaglesham, among others.

If you've been reading Wonder Woman lately, you'll be wondering just what a cheesy selfie has to do with the storyline. The book has been pretty serious of late, but again Terry considered it to be a blast. "I don't think it fits in well at all with the storytelling of Brian Azzarello, but I kinda think that was the point of it – fun!"

### HIS CONSTANT COMPANION

Packaging artwork for a favourite cereal brand may be a nice diversion, but Wonder Woman has been a staple in Terry's comic book career. When DC relaunched the

series at number one back in 2006, it was Terry who drew the book's iconic covers, and interiors, with the inks done by Rachel, and colours by Alex Sinclair.

Curvy and big-bosomed, the Greek goddess was sexy without going over the top in that direction. She was physically strong and somewhat regal, never seeming like a women's wrestling caricature, which is how she'd appeared at certain times before Terry worked on the title.

During this period, Terry's Wonder Woman images often displayed a pin-up style, which is a characteristic of much of his artwork. "I'm a huge fan of pin-up work," he says. "Gil Elvgren first and foremost, but also Vargas and Petty, and

### AMAZON ATTACK

Inked by Terry's wife Rachel, Wonder Woman volume 3 number 13 came out in December 2007 and featured a battle with Hydra.



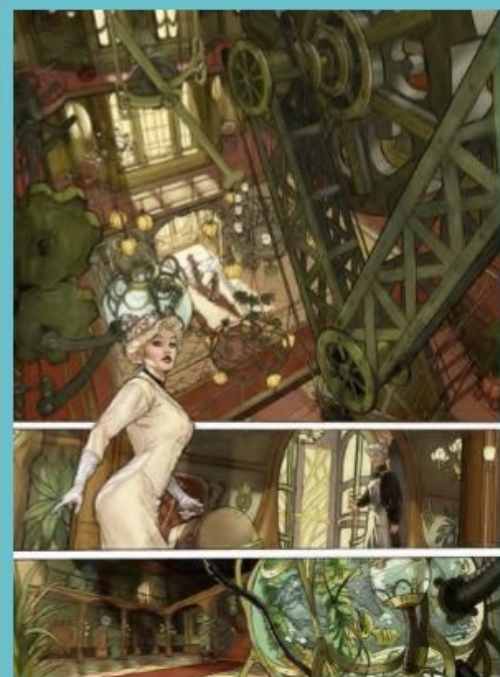
© DC Comics

comic artists Frank Frazetta, Dave Stevens and Adam Hughes. Even Mucha, Rockwell, Leyendecker and tons of modern day male and female animators. It's fairly pervasive these days."

However, drawing voluptuous woman has never been his only goal. "Currently, I'm drawing the big Marvel Avengers versus X-Men event book, Axis. I'm also doing a big Teen Titans original graphic novel and just beginning a Star Wars series that's set in the classic universe. So, I'm not stereotyped by those who employ me and I feel very comfortable working in a range of stories, genres and characters."

He continues: "Of course, when something calls for something 'pin-up-y'





### STRANGE DREAMS

During her time at the chateau, Coraline has strange dreams that lead her into the adventure.

I'm perfectly happy to do it, but I feel like I've grown enough as an artist to see that it could be too limiting to have that be your only strength. Interestingly enough, most of the great pin-up artists are terrific all-round artists – I think because you need a tremendous amount of anatomic, drafting, colour and character knowledge to do it well... all skills derived from working hard as an art student."

### ENGINEERING HIS CAREER

Terry didn't set out to become an artist. He'd been drawing since he was eight or nine and grew to become a big comics fan as a teenager. When he enrolled in college, he was studying to become an engineer – a very practical profession. But he also decided to take a basic drawing and design course to add to his self-taught skills.

"It was my first real chance to take art classes," he says. "As the years went by at college, I bumped up the number of art classes more and more, and my skill level improved exponentially over this time. Over the summers I would work on comic book portfolios to take to conventions and there was so much comic book work coming out at the time that I thought, 'Hey, I can do this.' By my fourth year of college I was working full-time in comics."

Terry's big break came in 1993 with *Mantra*, a title in the Ultraverse, a creation of the indie publisher Malibu, which was acquired by Marvel the following year. The book was about a warrior called Lucasz who could be reincarnated each time



### CORALINE

Released in 2004, *Songes: Coraline* is about a voluptuous young governess working for a young steampunk inventor.



### CÉLIA

Both of the *Songes* books were republished as a collection, and was called *Muse* in English.

## SONGES

Terry thinks highly of the *Songes* books – *Coraline* and *Célia* – that he created with a French publisher

*Songes: Coraline* (2004) and *Songes: Célia* (2012) were created for the French publisher Les Humanoïdes Associés. Both feature curvy French ladies in a 19th century setting. "I grew up a fan of Moebius and Heavy Metal and the translations Dark Horse had done, so I was very interested. Plus, it was the chance to do all the art myself – especially being able to colour my work, which I had longed to do with all my fine-art training."

For the colour scheme, he took inspiration from 19th century illustration and you'll detect a little of that Rackham tea-stain feel to it. "The book was shot from my pencils and then coloured in Photoshop and I had the time to teach myself. The experience turned me into a much superior storyteller."



## HARLEY QUINN

This Batman villainess had her roots in TV, but became a high point in Terry's career

In 2000, DC took an innovative step in taking Harley Quinn, a character from the highly stylised *Batman: The Animated Series*, and put her into a comic book. Terry Dodson was the artist who was chosen to work alongside writer Karl Kesel, with Rachel Dodson doing the inking and Alex Sinclair the colours.

"I was a super-huge Bruce Timm fan at the time, so it couldn't have been better for me to work on it," says Terry. "This was the first time Harley was drawn in a realistic style and I was able to draw the Batman universe without the pressure of the *Batman* book. This remains to this day one of my most popular projects, because DC keeps the entire run of it in print."



## REAP THE BENEFITS OF OVERLAPPING YOUR ART

"Depth and perspective are always hard to achieve within the limitations of a comic book panel. Overlapping shapes from the foreground to background provide the easiest solution to this problem."



### RED ONE

Not Marvel. Not DC. Red One is a creator-owned book Terry's working on with Xavier Dorison.

he fell in battle. However, this ability waned and on his last re-incarnation he ended up in the body of a woman called Eden Blake. Like Wonder Woman, Eden was blessed with a very curvy physique and an even tighter outfit.

### JESTER BIT OF FUN

Later, Terry worked on Harley Quinn, who received her own series in 2000. Again, he drew alongside his wife Rachel, and developed a strong female lead, this time in the Batman canon. Dressed like a jester and beginning as a cohort of the Joker, she forms her own gang of hellcats. The title of book one, A Harley Quinn Romance, played on the name of the US publisher Harlequin, with its racy novels aimed at housewives.

In 2006, he added something new to his portfolio in the form of Songes, which was drawn for the French publisher Les Humanoïdes Associés. He produced another of these volumes in 2012, with a

### HARLEY QUINN

Terry drew issue 1, when poor love-struck Harley is betrayed by the Joker.



### OH LORDY

An alternate cover for Legendary Star-Lord, issue 1, which came out this summer.



### ROSE CITY

Terry created this piece this year specifically for fans who were attending the Rose City Comic Con held in Portland, Oregon, US.

"I enjoy doing the creator-owned work the most, because it's always the type of work that I enjoy as a reader"

sexy female lead once again prominent in his work. It gave Terry a taste for working with European talents.

Today, one of his favourite projects is called Red One, a creator-owned publication he's doing with French writer Xavier Dorison. "It's set in 1977 and the catchline is: 'What happens when America's greatest superhero is actually a Russian spy?' It's very much a Tarantino, funky, 70s-inspired romp – a totally different project for me – but challenging and rewarding in its own way."

Terry adds: "I enjoy doing the creator-owned work the most because it's always the type of work I enjoy as a reader and is usually the most satisfying, because I love

to create. I feel like I'm able to do the kind of work that I've always wanted to do. My tastes are varied and so it would be stifling to only work with company-owned superhero universes."

Watch for Red One in March 2015 if you're looking for something a bit more innovative, but if you love superheroes Terry's Axis crossover featuring the X-Men and the Avengers will be out before Christmas, as will his Teen Titans graphic novel called Earth One. He also has another of his Bombshells sketchbooks coming out in 2015, which he's working on at the moment. Twenty two years in the business, and Terry's certainly showing no signs of hanging up his artist's cape!



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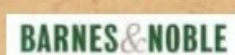
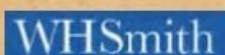
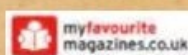
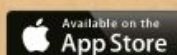
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Stanley Lau shares his four-step process for turning a comic character into a superhero, for our cover.

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Mitch Breitweiser achieves dynamic colour and light by applying brush and layer effects in Photoshop.

### 84 Use pencils in your comic art

Tula Lotay adds a traditional feel to digital comic art with pencils, brown paper and watercolour textures.

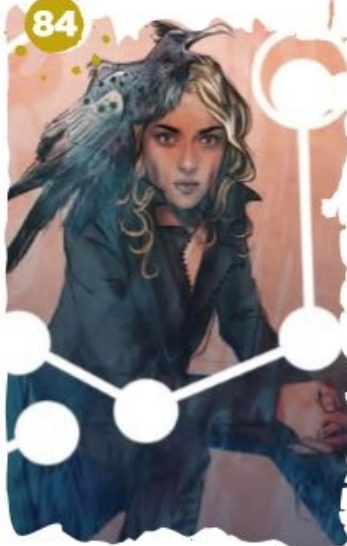
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## Photoshop & Painter POWER UP YOUR SUPERHERO ART

**Stanley Lau** shares the details of his four-step process for painting cover art, as he turns an original comic character into a superhero!

### Artist PROFILE

**Stanley Lau**  
COUNTRY: Singapore



Stanley, also known as Artgerm, is one of Asia's most

prominent digital artists. As well as co-founding the Imaginary Friends Studio, he creates cover art for the likes of DC, Marvel, Capcom and Square Enix.

<http://ifxm.ag/stanlau>

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### PRO SECRETS

#### Compositing

To composite an image, try visualising the scene in a 3D environment. Put in the characters, pose them, bring in all the props: weapons, magic spells, even weather effects. Then pick up a camera, choose the right lens (wide angle, telephoto, fish-eye) and fly around the scene, until you find the best angle and crop for the image. With that done mentally, make a sketch.

**C**laire Howlett contacted me recently about working on a cover for a comic issue of ImagineFX. After a few rounds of discussion we decide to keep things simple by turning my original character, Pepper, into a superhero. I know I'm in for some fun!

When it comes to making digital art comic covers, I regularly use a process which seems to be popular with most of my comic-related clients. It has four stages: sketch, lines, flats and colours.

First, I make lots of mental sketches, then choose the best one to sketch

digitally. I have 70 per cent of the image in mind, leaving 30 per cent for surprises.

Next, I do clean and precise line work, creating smooth and continuous lines by visualising the start and end point of each, and the path to connect them, then draw it on the canvas.

For flattening, I create a new layer and use the Magic Wand to select the line work layer, expand the selection by a few pixels and fill it with the local colours.

For the colouring stage I use the New Simple Water brush in Painter. As I paint, it's crucial to keep check of the lighting scheme and stick to it.

I use long, smooth strokes and vary the pressure to produce subtle value changes in one continuous movement. I call this stroke economy – using the fewest strokes to achieve the most definition.

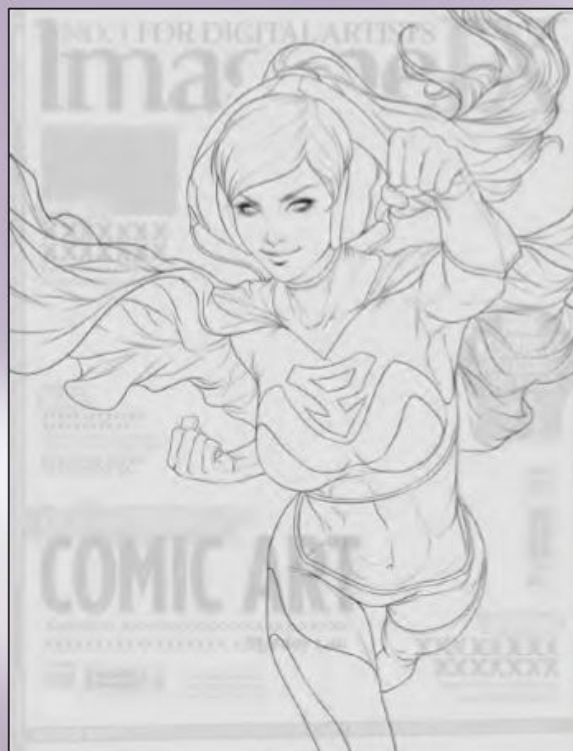
I bring the image back and forth between Photoshop (colour tweaking and texturing) and Painter (rendering). After colouring I add atmospheric effects and textures in Photoshop, and test various colour treatments until the image matches what I had envisioned.

Many of my comic covers and character pin-ups are done with this same method. I hope you enjoy it.



#### 1 Do a rough sketch

I make a rough sketch in Painter 9.5 (my favourite version due to its speed and simplicity), using the default Grainy Cover Pencil, because it's slightly textured and resembles real pencil well. For the Superhero theme I choose a costume design with an emblem on her chest, a cape, body-wrapping attire, her signature headphones, and set her in a classic flying pose.



#### 2 Lay down the line-work

Once the sketch is approved, I create clean line-work on top of the sketch layer in Painter, using the same Pencil brush. For this particular painting process, I need to make sure all of the lines are closed for easy flattening later. Many of the details not present in the sketch are added in this lining stage, and her anatomy is corrected. The line-work takes me an hour.







## PRO SECRETS

### Cut back on your layers

I'm not too much of a layer freak. I prefer to keep the number of layers as few as possible (usually four or five), to keep my painting process efficient and speedy. This also means that I don't waste time searching for the right layer to paint on.



### 3 Flattening in Photoshop

I select the areas that share the same local colour, expand the selection by three or four pixels, then fill in the colours. I fill the figure with a base colour before flattening individual areas, to prevent gaps between filled areas. I apply a muted colour to the background, instead of white, because it affects how you perceive the tonal values during painting.



### 4 Establish the lighting scheme

I duplicate that layer for painting, keeping the original flat layer locked to avoid accidents. Pepper has a weaker studio spotlight in front and strong sunlight from the left (out of frame) behind her. I render her skin first, so I can use it as a lighting reference point for other areas. I tint the lines to medium brown and set the Layer mode to Multiply.

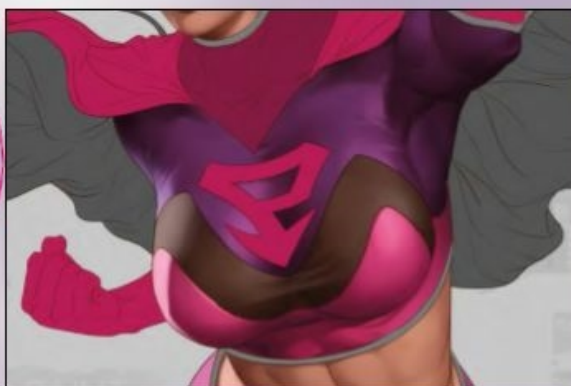
## Shortcuts

### Hue/Saturation

Ctrl+U (PC)

Cmd+U (Mac)

Quickly make colour, saturation and lightness changes on the selected layer.



### 5 Rendering Pepper's costume

I move on to render her costume here. To make the fabric slightly more interesting to look at, I decide to render it so that it has a slightly silky finish. It's important to keep the lighting scheme in mind and place the specular highlights carefully, so that the volume and materials can be depicted in a more convincing manner.



## WORKSHOP BRUSHES

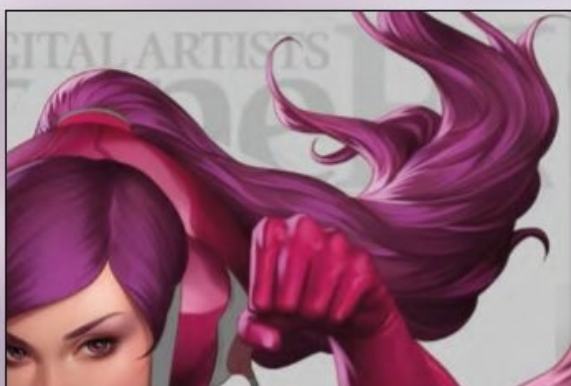
### PAINTER

#### CUSTOM BRUSH: GRAINY COVER PENCIL

I use only two brushes for this workshop. The Grainy Cover Pencil for sketch and lines...

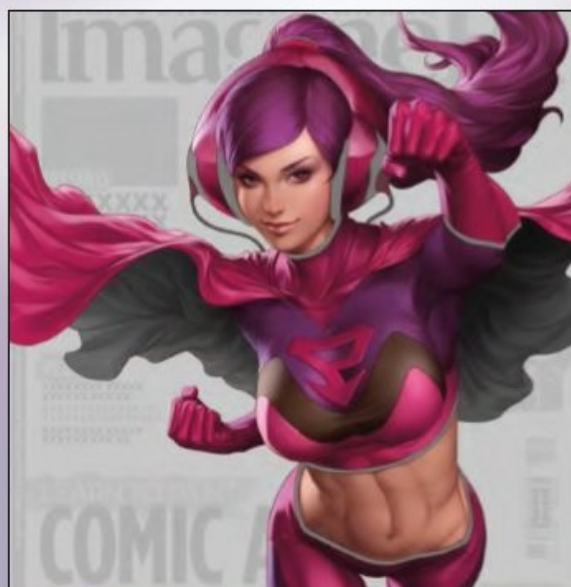
#### NEW SIMPLE WATER

...and the New Simple Water brush, which is ideal for colouring.



### 6 Depicting the hair

I continue with her hair and headphones. For a silky-looking rendering, pay attention to the specular light's placement and size - they should be contrasted and small. I don't render every single strand of hair, but break it into groups and flow cohesively, otherwise her hair may look too fizzy. I take note of how the shiny headphones reflects the surroundings.

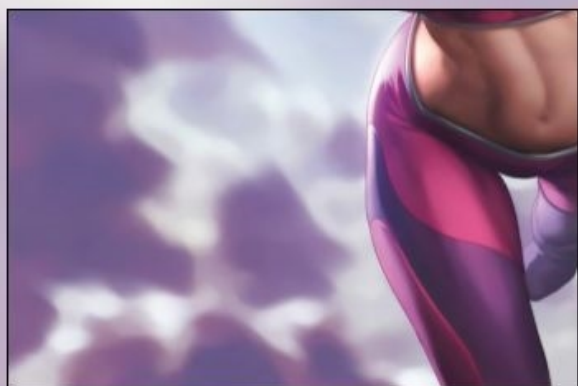






## 7 Additional cosmetics

I continue painting the remaining elements, adding gradients to the background as a base for a cloudscape later. I apply Pepper's makeup in Photoshop and a random speckle brush helps her chest emblem glitter a little. The line-work layer's transparency is locked and tinted with the respective local colours to make it blend better with the colouring layer.



## 8 Adding clouds

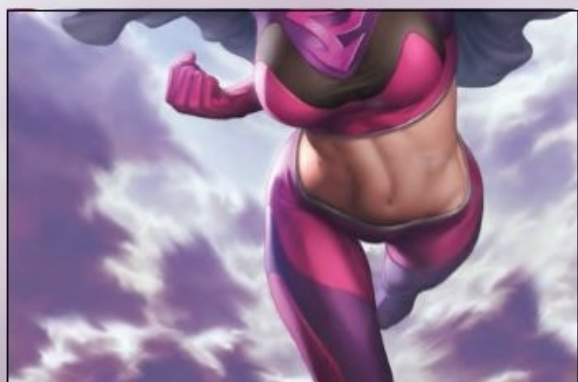
Next I paint in some rough clouds, with sunlight behind them, using the colours found on Pepper's body. At this stage I keep the objects loose and I plan them carefully so that they support the character visually, but without interfering or distracting from her too much.



## PRO SECRETS

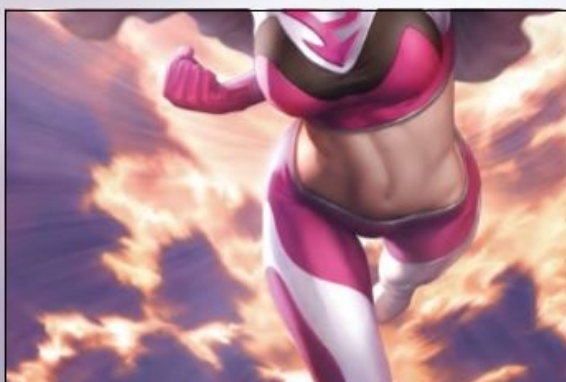
### Action frame

To pose a character in action you need to understand the entire sequence. Play it out in your head in four stages: set-up, transition, impact/climax, follow through. Try to find the frame of the sequence that best conveys your idea; the moment of impact isn't always best. For example, a Samurai keeping his sword after a powerful slash (follow through) while his opponent splatters blood may be more compelling than showing the blade making fatal contact.



## 9 Greater definition

I'm happy with where I'm going with the cloud planning, so I give them better definition, using the Loaded Palette Knife tool in Painter. Then I use the Palette Knife, as a blending tool, to introduce some sense of movement to the clouds, according to the flying direction of Super Pepper. Talking of which, our new superhero is pretty much ready!



## 10 Final colour edits and a sense of speed

Of course, nothing is really done without the blessing of the ImagineFX team. Daniel Vincent, the magazine's art editor, suggests some colour edits on Pepper's costume and the clouds. I've also thrown in some speed lines to accentuate a comic superhero's sense of speed. Now I'm really happy with the image. It's always a joy working with the ImagineFX team! ●



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## SketchBook Pro

# STREAMLINE YOUR SKETCH PROCESS

Get to grips with SketchBook Pro's Lagoon user interface and enhance your workflow in this excellent drawing program, says **Paris Christou**

**A**utodesk's SketchBook Pro for Windows and Mac is known for giving artists easy access to its many tools when working on any type of artwork.

The philosophy behind the software is to help artists feel they have an application that acts just like a real-world paper sketchbook, which you'd use while out and about. The program is quick, simple and very effective.

SketchBook's Pro's Lagoon is a user interface (UI) that offers a series of common shortcuts for speedy access. By default, it's located on the bottom left of the software screen.

Having these common shortcuts in one compact area helps you to streamline your painting process. Better still, you can even modify the Lagoon to fit your exact needs. So, let's see how this can be achieved...

### Artist PROFILE

**Paris Christou**  
COUNTRY: Cyprus



Paris is a 2D animator, illustrator and teacher at ToonBox

Studio. He's also a full-time YouTuber who's best known for his popular cartoon pin-up character Cherry. Paris is also the Founder of ToonBoxStudio.com.

[www.toonboxstudio.com](http://www.toonboxstudio.com)

### CUSTOMISE THE LAGOON INTERFACE



#### A. The Preference window

To customise Lagoon, select Edit > Preferences or SketchBook Pro > Preferences on the main toolbar. In the pop-up window select the Lagoon tab. The top half features all six options of the Lagoon.

#### B. Select tools and actions

Select any of the icons and you'll see the sub-options in the bottom half. To the right of them you'll see a section called Default Sketchbook Tools, which lists all the tools and actions available in SketchBook Pro.

#### C. Replace a tool or action

Select a sub-option, then scroll through the list to replace it with the tool or action you prefer. Artists never use every tool a software has. I replace any tools or actions I don't need, to speed up my workflow.



### 1 The Lagoon's tools

The Lagoon UI is an arc-looking palette that features six core elements. From left to right they are: Interface Controls, Tools/Views, Brushes, Colors, Edit and Files. Each element on the Lagoon has a series of shortcut options that you can access. For example, you can select your favourite brushes, the Lasso and other editable tools, rulers, layers, save your work and more.



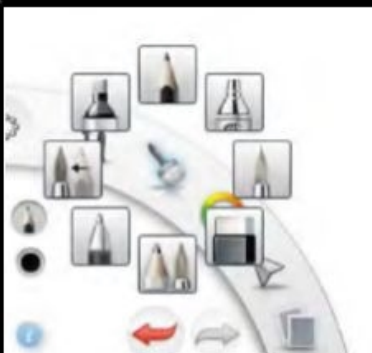
### 2 Selecting tools and actions

Click and hold down over any of these tools and you'll be presented with more options. To select any of these, just drag your mouse or stylus pen towards one of them and release. Once you've memorised the Lagoon's features, accessing any desired option will be instinctive, which will enhance your painting workflow.



### 3 Get the sketchbook feel

Depending on what type of artist you are, you can choose to hide everything on the screen apart from the Lagoon. This gives you a decent space for either sketching, painting or creating any style of artwork. Just hover over the Interface Controls element and select Title Bar Off. Then click Tab on your keyboard to hide everything.





# Manga Studio & Photoshop MAKE A HORROR COMIC PAGE



**Dave Kendall** takes you from script to finished page for the animated graphic novel Houses of the Holy, created for Madefire motion books

## Artist PROFILE

**Dave Kendall**  
COUNTRY: England



Dave is an illustrator and comic artist specialising in horror and

fantasy. His clients include Madefire, 2000 AD and Wizards of the Coast among others. [www.rustybaby.com](http://www.rustybaby.com)

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**  
See page 6 now!

**H**ouses of the Holy has been a part of my life for many years. It was one of the first sample strips produced for a fledgling company called Madefire ([www.madefire.com](http://www.madefire.com)). The first six pages became part of the funding portfolio, alongside Dave Gibbons' Treatment, and Liam Sharp's Captain Stone and MONO. Since then this Mike Carey-scripted horror tragedy, featuring the vampire

Magda, has punctuated my past four or five years. As Madefire has grown, Magda's life and mind has disintegrated.

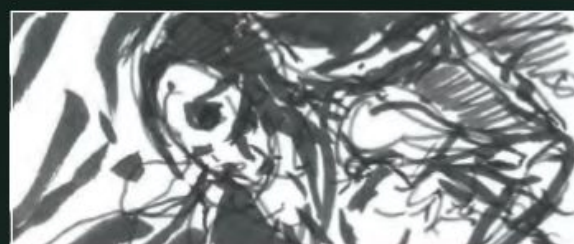
Madefire is a digitally driven storytelling platform that runs on Apple's iOS and Google's Android. It takes advantage of sound, layers and the ability to shake up the usually static pages of the comic book. The app is free to use and enables you to experiment with your own stories.

In this workshop I'll take you through the process for producing a Houses of the Holy page for Madefire. I'll explain the layering aspects of the comic and storytelling ideas. I'll be reinterpreting one of my early pages and significantly changing it, especially where the final reveal is concerned. So let's join Magda's father as he escorts his newly infected vampire daughter Magda through the woods. She's getting a little peckish...



**1 Words and pictures**  
The first step before you even pick up a pencil is the script. So get comfy and start reading. Don't touch that pencil. I tend to read it through a couple of times and start making notes on the third pass. I allow the dialogue and mood to dictate my decisions. The story must be served first, so make sure it's clear in your head. I'm very well served in having Mike Carey, one of the most respected writers in comics, as the father of this story.

**2 Arboreal framing device**  
This is a reinterpretation of a page I produced a couple of years ago. Inspired by Sergio Toppi, an Italian illustrator, I decide to use a tree to provide a framing device rather than a simple grid. The first two panels are framed by the branches of a tree that dominates the final panel. In Madefire the panels can be isolated with a large reveal that would build the suspense, making the dominant panel visible at the very end.



## PRO SECRETS

### Build the scene in stages

Use the powers of layers to build your characters. Start with a sketchy, high-energy first pass, and refine with each successive layer. Don't get bogged down trying to nail the exact pose, anatomy and details in the first drawing. You'll probably reject it anyway. Lower the Opacity of the layers to avoid confusing yourself.







## PRO SECRETS

### See images in your mind

Read novels, read biographies... read, read, read. If you're doing it right the pictures will come in myriad profusion. Not only will you be inundated with characters and environments, but they'll be from your own imagination. Look at a novel as a gymnasium for your mind. Films, comics and picture books can be inspirational, but they're not your own personal vision.



### 3 Gesture sketching

I never go straight in with highly accurate drawing. Instead, I start with gesture sketches and build up the accuracy, either with successive drawings or by using layers in Photoshop. This enables me to keep the energy of the initial sketch while refining anatomy and details. Here you can see examples of my sketchbook, to show how I develop panel ideas.



### 4 Digital blue line

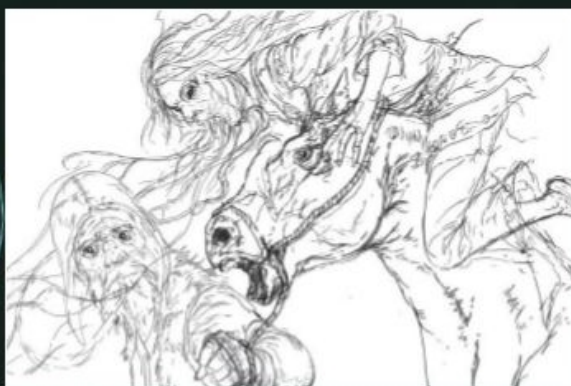
I scan in some of my more promising sketches and ideas to use as a base for designing the panels. I set the sketches as a layer. I apply another layer and fill it with a light cyan. If you set the blending mode to Screen it gives the underlying sketch a blue line effect. This colour cast enables me to differentiate between the refined pencils that I'll use above the sketch layer.

## Shortcuts

### Fill Selection

SHIFT+F5 (PC & Mac)

This Photoshop command enables you to quickly create layered elements in your art.



### 5 Simple brushes

For digital drawing I use simple brushes – I don't want lag because of a complex brush. Here I use the Manga Studio digital pencil. It's a brush with a light softness that, although it doesn't emulate pencil, gives a good base for painting. I enjoy drawing comic pages out in line. I could use block-in techniques, but drawing gives you a personal fingerprint.



### 6 Defining elements

I import the image into Photoshop. Normally I wouldn't worry about extracting and separating elements, but Madefire's experience can be enhanced by the power of its engine, and having separate layers makes construction easier. I use the Magnetic Lasso tool to roughly mask the pencil outline. The mask can be further refined with the Quick Mask feature.



### 7 Working in greyscale

Once I have masks for my separate pencil elements, I create layers with those selections filled in white, and apply my greyscale work. I isolate the layer (Ctrl+click) and apply a simple white-to-black gradient set on Multiply to build up the tones. This can give you a sense of lighting. I then place the highlights and shadows with simple brushes. I don't touch the drawing layer, which should be above the painting layer.







## 8 Refining the values

Once I'm happy with my values, I flatten the pencils to the greyscale layer and continue to refine the tonal values, using simple brushes. I carry out this simple value exercise on all the separate elements on the page. Because I'm working with multiple panels, I use the Group/Folder option to separate and lock them. Working on the wrong panel is frustrating!



## 9 Night colours

I apply a Color Blending layer to the whole page. Colour alters the hue without touching the values. I fill the layer with a twilight, night-time hue. Once the basic colour is set I work flesh tones and other colours into Magda, the horse and her father. Because it's a night scene I don't want to make it too saturated, so I move carefully, feeling my way.



## 10 Marrying colour to elements

Because all my elements are on separate layers I select the pixels on each layer, and lift an Identical selection from the colour layer. I pair the colour and greyscale layer together, and flatten them. After this stage my figure and background elements are independently coloured. If some colours overlap, I remove the offending areas with a brush set to Color Blend.



## 11 Colour refinement

The layers look a little anaemic to me, so more work is needed. I enhance the colour using an Overlay layer. This mode can affect the values of the image, so working colour into a separate layer gives you more control. I gently enhance areas throughout the page, usually working on one element at a time. Multiply and Color Dodge is useful in small amounts.



## 12 Cleaning up and enhancement

I've now tackled every panel and worked up the colour to a level I'm happy with, but I find there's always room to tweak and enhance. I notice that there are some small artefacts arising from the layering process, so I erase here and there and tidy up whatever is glaringly obvious to me.



## 13 Tailoring it for Madefire

Although this strip would work without square panels, I add some to give more options for Madefire. When working on Houses of the Holy I design the pages to work as a digital solution with the option of a printed book. People still like to hold the physical object. I'm told Houses of the Holy in tandem with Madefire's engine has induced jumps and shocks. ●



## PRO SECRETS

### Create neat comic panels

This is a simple but effective way to create floating panel borders with a consistent width and sharp corners. In Photoshop, on a separate layer, create a rectangular selection. Go to Edit>Stroke, choose a width in pixels, choose a colour, and set the location to inside. You can use the same technique to add fine black rules to the border.



Photoshop

# COLOUR A CRAZED COMIC CHARACTER

**Dave Wilkins** shows how to go from tonal rendering to colour image using traditional comic-book colouring technique and a flexible process

## Artist PROFILE

**Dave Wilkins**  
COUNTRY: US



Dave's works include Batman, Star Wars and Masters of the

Universe covers. But some of his proudest achievements are on upcoming projects, the El Zombo hardcover and a new animated short. <http://ifxm.ag/dwilkins>

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## PRO SECRETS

### Print master

Once your image is completely done, whether it's due to deadline or idea fatigue, be sure to adjust the Levels for printing. When you print an image, we get what we call a press gain, which happens when ink hits the paper and soaks in. The image will darken down anywhere from 15 to 20 per cent. To avoid lost detail in your darker areas, brighten your image through Adjustments and Levels.

**S**tarting with my final tonal rendering of everyone's favourite psychopath, the Joker, I'm going to take you through my comic colouring process, step by step. This is a simple, straightforward approach to colouring a tonal or greyscale work, using various tools, layer modes and the like, all within Photoshop.

The process is very flexible and enables me to manipulate and control the hue, value and saturation levels at each stage of the painting. When approaching a character as outlandish as the Joker, this will prove extremely helpful.

My goal is to apply colour while still preserving the tonal rendering, so that I can solve each visual problem separately.

Once I'm happy with the base colours and lighting temperature, I can smudge and paint on top to unify the image.

Being asked to do the Joker was like visiting an old friend; the crazy one who always got you into a mess while he walked away unscathed. So let's go back to Gotham and see what trouble we can get into, shall we?



### 1 Tonal effects

Once my greyscale values are in place, I convert the greyscale to RGB. Then I make the image fully sepia tone, so there's a blended-earth tone in the background as opposed to pure black, which has a tendency to get muddy. I open the Color Balance menu (Ctrl+B) and adjust my mid-tones to achieve the sepia tone effect.



### 2 Flattening the image

I take the Polygon Lasso tool, carve out individual shapes and fill them with a tone to represent the final colouration. Using the Magic Wand tool I click in and out of selected areas, adjusting parts without disturbing successful areas. This is helpful later when the full image is merged down and blended together and I need to make final tweaks.

All images © DC Comics







## Shortcuts

### Brush diameter

Ctrl+[ or ] (PC)

Cmd+[ or ] (Mac)

Increase or reduce your brush's diameter, for a more efficient painting process.



### 3 Colour selections

I set that layer to Overlay. This gives me an instant snapshot of colour, where the flats are working and what will need fixing. I can see the beginnings of the colour selections that will transition throughout the piece. The Joker's signature purple suit and shock of green hair aren't quite on the mark yet, but I have the major landmarks.



### 4 Contrast and shading

I select certain flat areas, and using Overlay and Multiply modes, I start to see the contrast and shading within the forms. I used to use Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V to copy and paste and almost always it would paste off centre and lining up the offset was frustrating. Last year a colleague asked, "Why don't you just use Ctrl+J?" Thanks Evan – I use it all day every day now!

## PRO SECRETS

### Know your anatomy basics

A lot of comic art is all about exaggeration – none more so than with the human body. But to exaggerate a figure correctly, you need to have a good grasp on real-life human anatomy. Take life-drawing classes, study textbooks such as those of Andrew Loomis, sketch your friends in different poses... do whatever it takes to increase your understanding of how the human body functions. You'll then have the confidence to draw and paint muscle-bound superheroes, or gangly supervillains.



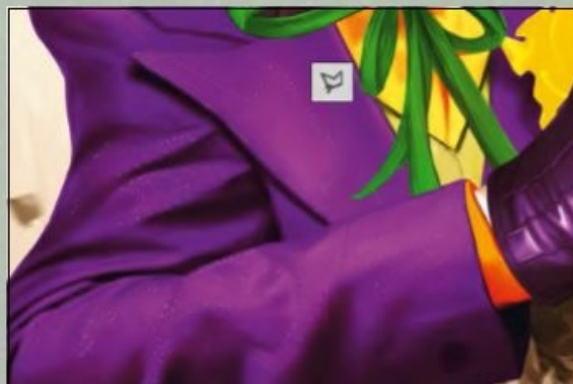
### 5 Personal tastes

This process is repeated and overlayed and multiplied. Copy and pasting the layers, and then utilising the Overlay or Multiply option quickly results in deeper values and more saturation. I then erase out what's too dark and keep what's most successful. I've always loved the red inflamed-eyes of Dave McKean's Joker, so I aim to emulate that distinctive look.



### 6 Hatching colours

Using the Eyedropper tool, I pick colours from the face to hatch and blend, for a clown's makeup foundation. I build up the forms, keeping it cohesive. I hold off using bright or hot colours. When doing a character as garish as the Joker, it's easy for colours to overpower and the values to lose out, so I save the rim-light hotspots and highlights for last.



### 7 Reference search

I continue the process of selecting from the flat layer, repeating steps two, three and four throughout the entire body, including the suit, bow tie and hair. I cruise the internet for suitable photo reference. When I have the time, I like to shoot my own reference for folds, wrinkles, lighting and such-like, as well as sculpt characters in ZBrush that I can light for the tonal and values stage.

### 8 Brightening it up

I use the Polygonal Lasso tool to carve out shapes that will represent highlights on the lapel and sleeve. And I then use Ctrl+J to drop that layer with my selection in place and turn the layer to Screen. This brightens that area and the more I use this technique, the closer my colour goes to white.





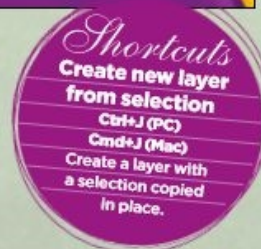
## 9 Highlights information

My brightening technique gives the painting some harsh, faceted edges, but I'll deal with them during the next stage. This is just an over-simplified bright shape that gives me some highlights information on the top of the sleeve.



## 10 Blending shapes

I select the Smudge tool to smear and blend the harsh shapes together for a more cohesive piece. I continue this blending method throughout the image, until the desired look is achieved. Once I start to mimic the materials that I'm going for, I know I'm on the home stretch.



## 11 Refining the scene

I continue to refine edges and forms, cleaning up edges and fixing anything glaring or that looks off. This is the tedious part of the painting process so it helps to have some decent tunes (I prefer 80s and 90s anime) to push through this part... ugh!



## 12 Making the figure pop

With lighting, the forms must read no matter what. Does my silhouette punch out well? Do fabric folds show clearly? Once they do, I settle on the lighting and start the rim-light to pop the figure forward, like the film posters I grew up with. Richard Amsel's awesome Flash Gordon and Mad Max posters, and pretty much everything Drew Struzan has ever done.



## 13 Controlling the light

When using such flamboyant colours, it's helpful to use a layer with a colour gradient over the scene, which enables me to erase areas that are too saturated. I use the adage: warm light equals cool shadows, or cool light equals warm shadows. I've given him a warm rim-light, which dictates the cooler shadowy areas below the door handle and in the background.



## 14 Making my final tweaks

On the rim-light layer I put a Layer Style on, use Outer Glow and adjust it to an earthy orange. For final tweaks I use the Lasso and Warp tools to nudge things into place. I do this as a last resort – I usually make adjustments along the way, redrawing and reworking, so I'm constantly learning and reinforcing traditional skills. Remember, Ctrl+J all day! ●

## PRO SECRETS

### Creating chaotic focus

When dealing with such a chaotic piece where there's lots of motion going on, such as the Joker smashing through a door or Batman falling through a skylight, it's good to use landmarks such as jagged debris pointing towards what you wish your viewer to focus on.



# Photoshop COMIC COLOUR AND LIGHT EFFECTS

**Mitch Breitweiser** powers up your painting technique, revealing how to achieve dynamic colour and light by using brush and layer modes

## Artist PROFILE

**Mitch Breitweiser**  
COUNTRY: US



Mitch has over a decade of comic industry experience under his belt, most notably the Captain America books for Marvel Comics. He's now working on multiple projects for his studio, Breitweiser Haus.  
<http://itxm.ag/mitch-b>

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## PRO SECRETS

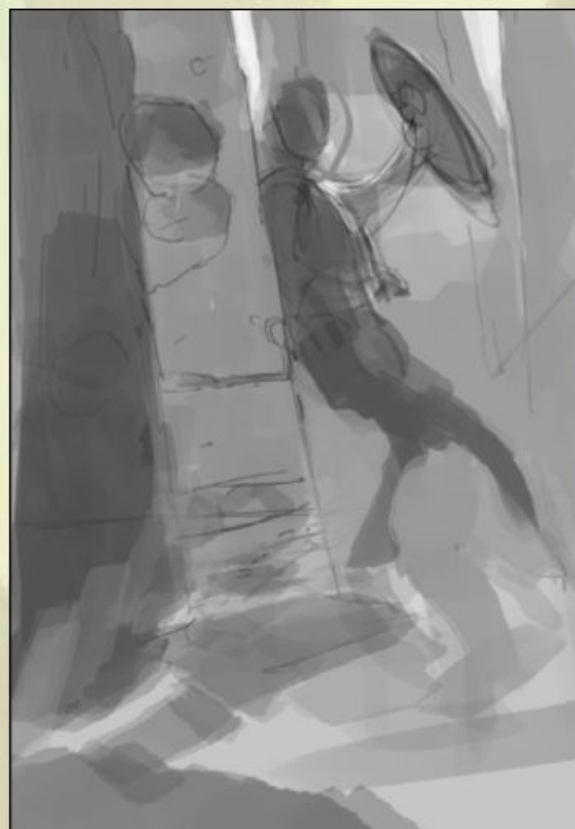
### Pencil pushing

I often draw and paint in a sculptural way, and the best tool for this approach is the Pencil tool as opposed to the softer Brush tool. I'm not eschewing the Brush tool entirely, but my heavy lifting is done with the Pencil. Its anti-aliased edge provides some distinct advantages. Images remain sharp even after a lot of blending, and that clarity reflects in print. Furthermore, the Pencil tool is less taxing on the system resources.

**C**olour has been on my mind recently. You see, I'm lucky enough to share a studio with the best colour artist in the comic book business, Elizabeth Breitweiser. She's my wife, so I may be biased (I'm not). Both of us love to paint, even though we apply it in different ways, but we also love to share the little tricks we learn along the way. I have to give her due credit for some of the techniques used in this workshop.

So here, I'll be expropriating some of our techniques, including how we use brush and layer effects to create dramatic lighting and unique colour harmonies. I'll be approaching this digital piece in a more impressionistic way: leaving the initial drawing fairly loose, deconstructing and reconstructing the forms, layering colour and texture, and manipulating the light as I go. Hopefully, it'll be a constant process of discovery that doesn't become bogged down in the process.

One thing that you might find surprising is how few (if any) layers I paint with. Perhaps I'm just a little old-fashioned, but my brain reaches a saturation point with layers where they become counter-intuitive to the thrill-seeking nature of my creative impulses. I simply merge them all down and paint on. It's not that you can't make great art with 40 layers – it's that I can't. I'm a painter and I want to paint... just with the convenience of the Undo command!



**1 Sketch a raw and unfiltered rough**  
The objective of this stage is to get that idea out of your head and on to the canvas as quickly and expressively as possible, without sweating the details. In this case, it's Captain America, shield poised for action, in a dramatically lit and rubble-strewn scene. I'm still unsure who to pit Cap against, so I leave the opposing side of the pillar unresolved for now.



**2 Carving out the light**  
Using my custom broad triangle brush, I push the paint around until the mid-tones and highlights separate and begin to inform the major forms. I scribble in some framing lines as I go, and lock in the basic compositional elements.

All images © Marvel









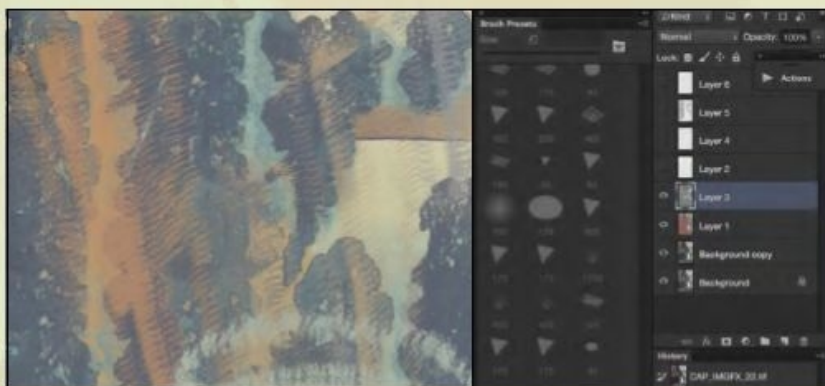
## 3 Behold the Winter Soldier

As I continue to carve out the light and form, the counterweight figure to Captain America emerges as the Winter Soldier. I've purposely left the horizon line in the sketch, which cuts across Cap's shin. While this piece doesn't require advanced perspective, the drawing would still turn into a mess without some basic guides.



## 4 It's penciling, of sorts

If this were a more complex painting then it would require a tighter pencil and tonal drawing, and probably a colour flat such as those used for line-art. However, I'm working in a more impressionist manner and without reference on this piece, and I'm getting anxious to dive into colour and light.



## 5 Create a texture

I literally take my inspiration and throw it at my painting, tearing a beautiful Hiroshi Yoshida woodblock print to shreds (digitally, of course) to use as a texture. I cut, crop, twist, clone, scumble and distress the image until it looks right. There's no secret to it, and you have to discover your own unique and creative ways to create texture. It's a fun way to experiment.



## 6 Colour glazing

Glazing is the process of colourising the greyscale artwork, and it's one of the few instances where I use several layers. My previously colour texture is set to Soft Light, and I apply some colour glazes on another Soft Light layer. I set two new layers to Overlay and use them to block in light and push the contrast.

**RESOURCES**

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

**PHOTOSHOP**

**CUSTOM BRUSHES: TRIANGLE 28**

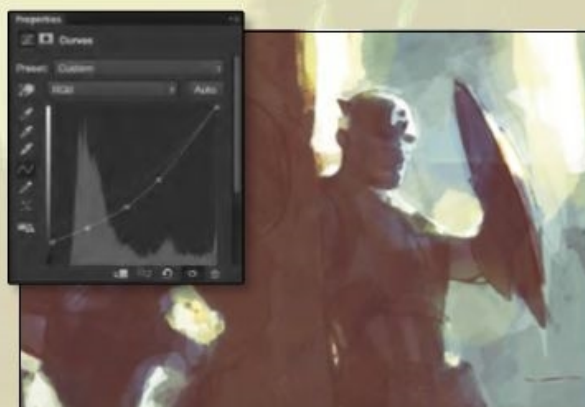
A broad triangle brush used in the early stages to carve out the forms.

**CHALK 60**

This slightly modified Chalk brush isn't particularly fancy, but it did most of the work.

**CHALK 44**

Another modified Chalk brush, but with more texture. Used like coloured pencil over a watercolour painting.



## 7 Fine-tuning the colour

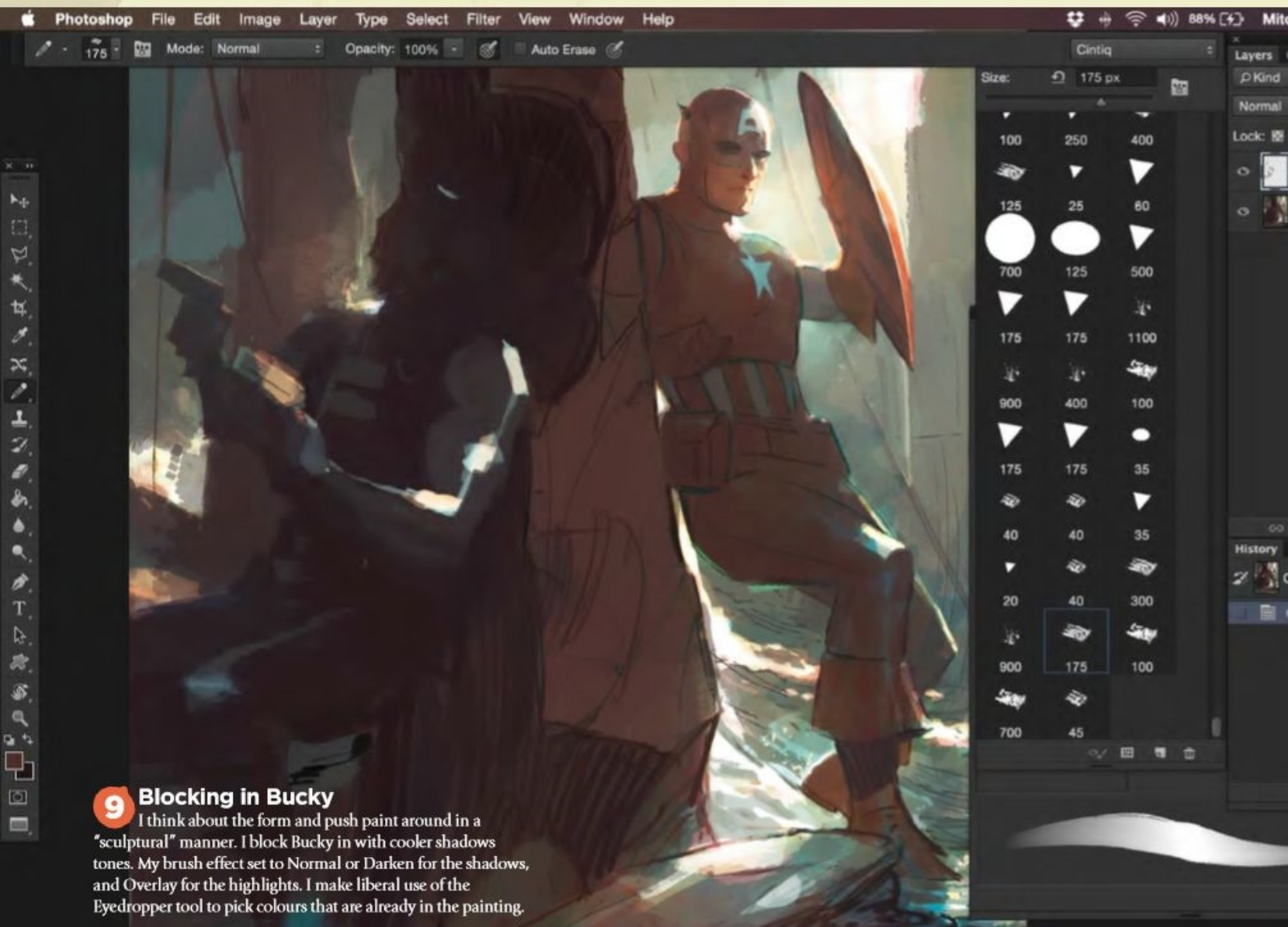
I merge my layers so that I'm working on a flattened image. I use my Chalk brush to rein in some of the contrast and noise, using brush effects such as Lighten or Darken. I also begin to fine-tune my colour palette using adjustment layers. Here I'm using a Curves adjustment layer, but I also make use of Hue/Saturation and Selective Color layers throughout the painting process.



## 8 Back to the mid-tones

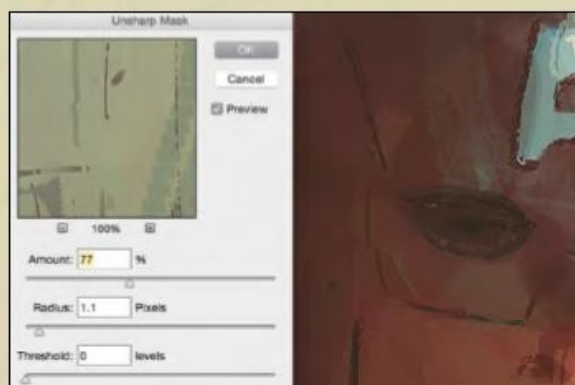
I refine the forms, but also shift the darker tones into the middle ranges with a Curves adjustment layer. Once I achieve a pleasing colour harmony in the mid-tones, the lower notes and highlights almost tell me exactly where they need to go. I achieve the watercolour-like light effects with my layers of Overlay light technique – see my Pro secrets for more details.





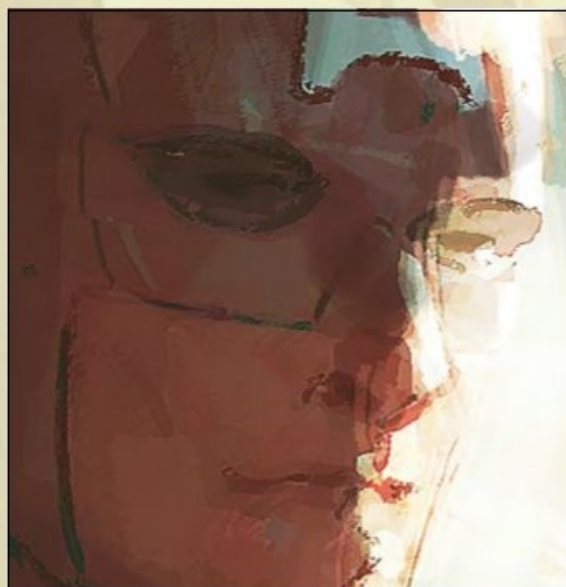
## 9 Blocking in Bucky

I think about the form and push paint around in a "sculptural" manner. I block Bucky in with cooler shadows tones. My brush effect set to Normal or Darken for the shadows, and Overlay for the highlights. I make liberal use of the Eyedropper tool to pick colours that are already in the painting.



## 10 Make use of an Unsharpen Mask

I'm a sucker for the crisp, anti-aliased, hard edge of the Pencil tool. But, even while working with the tool, some of that sharpness can become lost. That's where the Unsharpen Mask comes in handy (select Filter>Sharpen>Unsharpen Mask). To reclaim your sharpness set the Amount to between 70 and 80, Radius to 1.1 and Threshold to 0.





## PRO SECRETS

### Using layers of Overlay light

Here's a technique we've been applying recently to achieve a watercolour-like lighting effect.

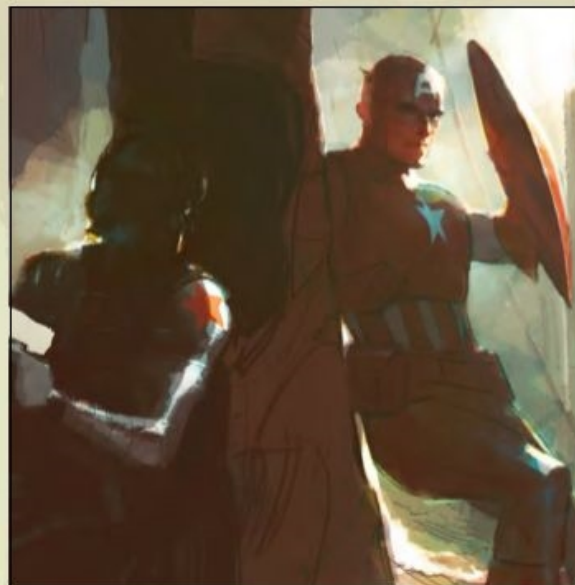
Create several new layers over a painting or coloured line art. Three or four layers should do. Apply the Overlay layer effect to each layer, and perhaps set one to Hard Light if you want a very chromatic highlight.

Then apply alternating splashes of warm and cool high key colours on to each layer. This creates a multi-hued splash of light.



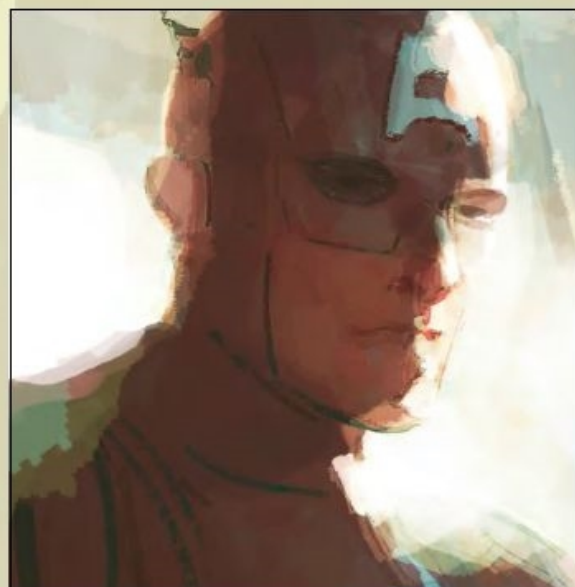
## 11 Embrace those happy accidents

I had an art professor who would encourage us not to sweat minor goofs. He would call them happy accidents in an effort to alter our perspective about an artistic mishap. Today, the unforeseen happy accident are the star icons emblazoned on both of the characters. I make sure to utilise this repeating motif, to allegorise the dual natures of this hero/nemesis pair.



## 12 Define the facial features

Now's a good time to examine the progress of the faces. On Bucky's face, I work with a mid-tone base before sculpting with light, by layering the Overlay brush and layer effects. I apply a cool grey reflected light and Bucky's face emerges. On Cap, I notice how natural light affects the more translucent areas of the face, such as the nose and the earlobe.



## Shortcuts

### Eyedropper tool

Ctrl (PC)

Cmd (Mac)

Map this command to your tablet for fast access to the Eyedropper tool.



## 13 All is lost... or not!

I do a little writing too, which led me to the work of mythologist, Joseph Campbell, and his famous Hero's Journey. A universal event cycle defines a hero, but I found it applicable to many aspects of my creative life. Every painting is a birth, death and resurrection. We push past the moments where we believe all is lost ("Worst Painting EVER!"). Push on until our nemesis is slain. Then we return transformed to share new gifts of knowledge with our tribe. It's no secret. Just keep pushing.



## 14 Final polish

I let my painting sit for a day before viewing it one last time with a fresh set of eyes, and here I decide to push the warm and cool colour contrast. As always, this painting isn't truly finished, but the clock runs out on us all. Finish the race, give yourself a pat on the back, then get on to that next amazing work of art and apply what you've learned. The goal is growth. ●



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Brilliant new talent Miles Johnston  
shares his unique approach to  
creating fantasy art

## *Featuring...*

### ***Simplify your lines***

Art director Robh Ruppel reveals the secret to making every brush stroke count.



### ***Colour me good***

Carmen Sinek on how to apply colour to a black and white sketch.

### ***Sketchbook***

ImagineFX favourite Charlie Bowater recounts the stories behind her doodles.

### ***Inside Weta!***

We take a peek behind the scenes of New Zealand's famous Weta Workshop.





Photoshop

# USE PENCILS IN YOUR COMIC ART

**Tula Lotay** shows you how to add a traditional feel to your digital comic art, using pencils, brown paper and a range of watercolour textures

## Artist PROFILE

**Tula Lotay**  
COUNTRY: England



Tula illustrates Supreme: Blue Rose and DC's Vertigo Comic Bodies, and

she's best known for her portrayal of female characters. She's also director of comic art festival Thought Bubble. [www.tulalotay.com](http://www.tulalotay.com)

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**

See page 6 now!

## PRO SECRETS

### Consider the big picture

When creating a comic page see it as whole image rather than individual panels. Make sure the panels cleanly flow from one to the next, and the block blacks or colours balance out across the page. Look at books such as Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* for tips on how to make your page flow and create balance, so the reader can follow the story easily. Think of balance, composition and symmetry to help with this.

**F**or this workshop I'll take you through my comic book art process, using the cover for Supreme: Blue Rose #1 as an example. Supreme: Blue Rose is a seven-part comic that I'm illustrating with writer Warren Ellis, who's well known for Transmetropolitan and Trees.

I'll explain my process, including how I add a more traditional feel to my pieces

through multiple watercolour layers and textured paper. This cover process is the same technique I use for the interiors of Supreme: Blue Rose.

I use a five-stage process when creating my comics. First, I'll generate thumbnails for the composition. Then I'll create the digital line art using custom Photoshop brushes. I usually work in black for my line art or pencils, and tint the colour later

on. I'll then add a scanned, textured paper-base for the background: this is usually worn brown paper or an old book cover – any item with cracks and wear gives the base more character. Next, I'll add colour flats by hand – rather than a fill tool – which I work into as I go along. Finally, I'll layer various watercolour scans and textures over the top of the whole image to give it a more traditional feel.



### 1 Thumbnail and composition

This is the most important part to any drawing, especially a cover. I need to get my composition right first, noting where the logo and any graphics will be. I let my mind wonder and watch shapes forming. I take note of negative space and the flow of the image. Once I develop the right composition, I find reference to ensure that the perspective and drawing are correct.



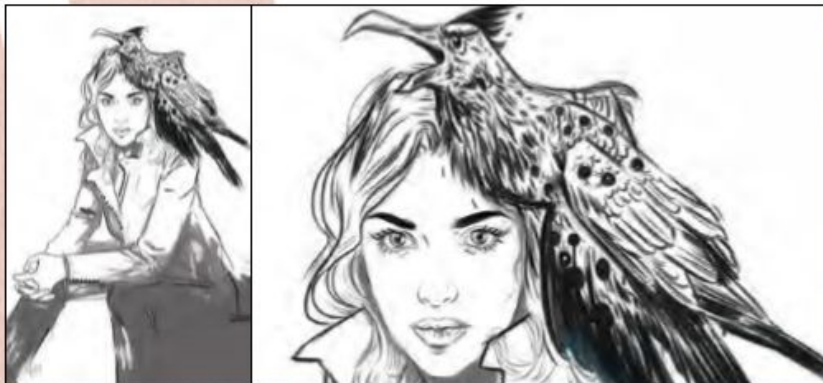
### 2 Begin creating the line art

I float between working traditionally and digitally with line art. I create roughs with a blue pencil in Photoshop, then print them to be inked and scanned. Because I'm not as confident with my inks, I usually work back into them digitally to neaten them up. When drawing lines digitally I create a new layer, or if I'm working traditionally I scan at a very high-res in greyscale. ➔









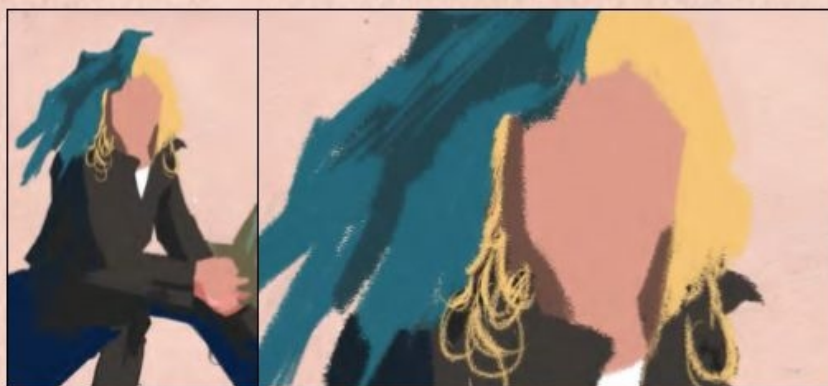
## 3 Flip the image

I find that it helps to reverse the image to see it afresh. If I'm drawing digitally I just flip the canvas horizontally, but if I'm drawing traditionally then I just hold the art in front of a mirror. This helps me to keep an eye on perspective, too. If the image looks correct after I've flipped it then it usually means that the perspective and composition are okay.



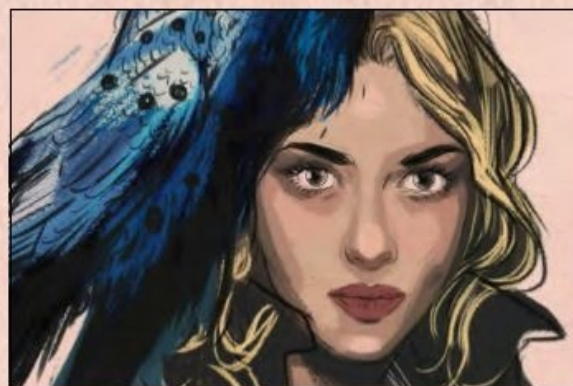
## 4 Base colour

I always pick a base colour and texture, to create an overall mood. Once I've prepped my line art so it's on its own layer, I drop this over the top of the background layer. I tend to use a scanned old, brown envelope as a base texture – I love the colour and texture. I then lighten it and give it a pink tint in Photoshop, using Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation.



## 5 Introduce colour flats

With colour flats, unlike most artists, I prefer to colour with a custom brush with a feathered edge: the lines resemble a traditional brush and it's more touch-sensitive. Furthermore, I can add marks and an uneven style, rather than just having a basic flat colour. I make sure that colours are on different layers, so I can adjust them as I go.



## 6 Colour details and refinements

Once I've laid down the basic colours in my composition, I create a new layer and continue to colour into this, adding shadows and highlights and refining base colours. Sometime I'll use the Blur tool on the face to soften skin tone. It's important to identify a light source and let that dictate where the highlights and shadows should rest.



## 7 Tint the line work

Tinting can bring a piece together, turning it warmer or colder and making the line pop out. I still have my line art on a separate layer, so I pull that into my painting and match it up to the existing line I'm using. I drop my new line layer behind the existing line and select Image>Adjustments>Selective Color to change my new line art to a colour that will enhance the piece.



## 8 Complementary colour gradient

I experiment with watercolour layers and gradients. This is a fun part of the process that can completely change the look of a piece. I create a darker area at the bottom to make the piece moodier. I create a new layer and pick a colour, then select the Gradient tool and pull up from the bottom, so that the colour fades as it works its way up the image.

**WORKSHOP BRUSHES**

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: DRY MEDIA

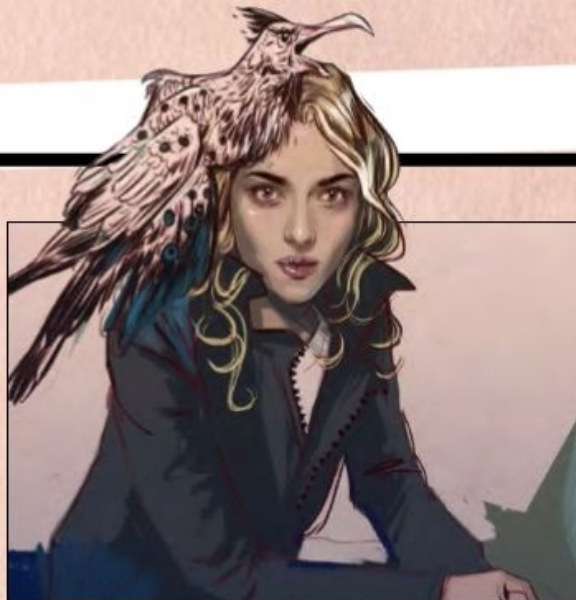
DRY PASTEL

DRY ROUGH SAMPLE

ROUGH VARIATION LINE

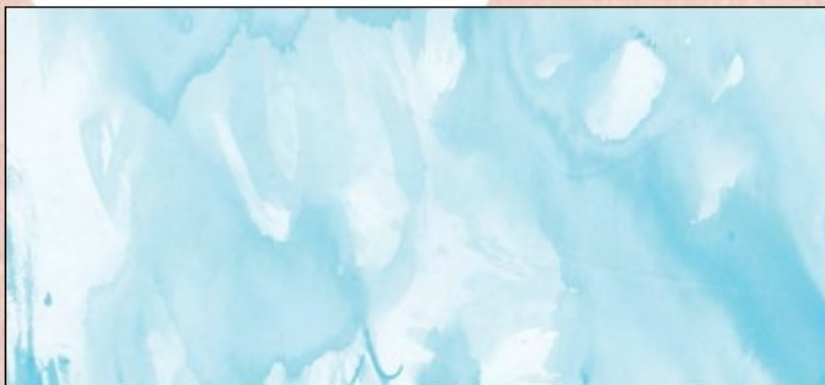
I tend to use a lot of Kyle Webster's brushes. His Dry Media ones have wonderful textures and can add to the traditional feel of an image. You can purchase them from [www.kylewebster.com](http://www.kylewebster.com).





## 9 Adjust the Opacity of the line

At this stage I chose to drop back my black and red line art because it looks a bit harsh and I want a softer, more painterly feel. So I just go to my Layers window and alter the Opacity percentage accordingly, until it looks right.



## 10 Apply the first watercolour texture

Now I lay the watercolour layer (I use this texture a lot) over the whole image, including the line work. It's interesting how different layer settings can change an image. I decide on the Screen setting because it seems to fit best. This is a great time to experiment, so I move the layer back and forth to see how it changes the image.



## 11 Taking a chaotic approach

After layering my screen watercolour texture, random watercolour marks start to make the image more interesting. At the beginning I was being precise when painting into the lines, but now I'm trying to break up that preciseness, to be more chaotic again. The overall colours will change depending on the watercolour layer setting, so it can really tie everything together.

## 12 Bring in the second watercolour texture

I introduce another watercolour texture, pulling it over in the same way as before. The layer is set to Overlay. It's the final top layer before the cover's graphics and logo. I've positioned it so we can see the pink watercolour lines on her cheeks and the big blurred area over her eyes, which implies the subtle appearance of a warrior.



## 13 Texture overlay

The image is almost there. I play around with the Opacity of the different layers until it feels right. I flatten the whole image, then work into it a bit more to neaten it up, picking out the eyes and highlights to make them pop. I take the whole saturation down just a little, so it's more subdued.

## 14 Add the cover graphics

Time to add the graphics. I had always planned to have all the Supreme: Blue Rose covers join up using interlinking graphics. Because this is a sci-fi story, I want the top interlinking graphics to resemble star systems, astrological symbols and the necklace of one of the main characters. I drop the Saturation by a touch and call the image finished.

## PRO SECRETS

### Make room for speech

An easy mistake to make when drawing comics is to not give much thought to text placement. This could lead to problems, such as your panels being too small when there's a lot of text, or wasted time spent illustrating a background when it'll just be covered by text. The speech bubbles need to be part of the image so that your characters' dialogue is easier to follow.



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CG ARTISTS

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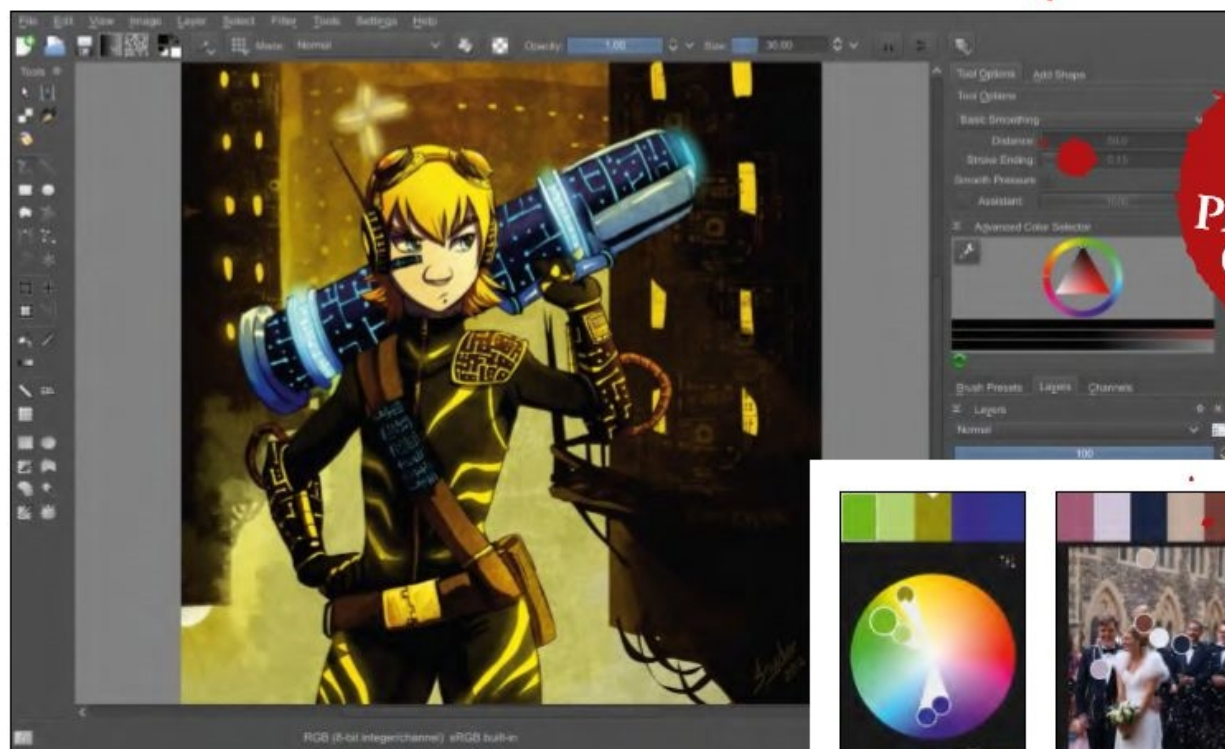


# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews

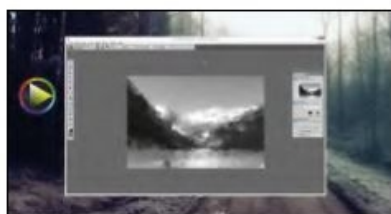


**Artist's Choice Award**  
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...



9  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



## SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

### 90 Krita

Updates to this free software have finally put it on an equal footing to Adobe's and Corel's big-hitters.

### 91 Color CC for iOS

Now you can capture cool colour combinations when out and about, with this free palette-creation app.

### 91 Painter Essentials 5

The price is certainly right, but how much can a cut-down version of Corel Painter offer a digital artist?

### 93 U3477PQU monitor

AOC's ultra-wide monitor offers plenty of painting workspace for a pretty respectable price.



### 93 True Image 2015

Backing up your data isn't sexy but should be a key part of your digital life. Does this software make the process easy?

## TRAINING

### 95 Visual Development for Feature Animation

Concept designer Gil Rimmer shows how to create a piece of art where every element supports the story.

## BOOKS

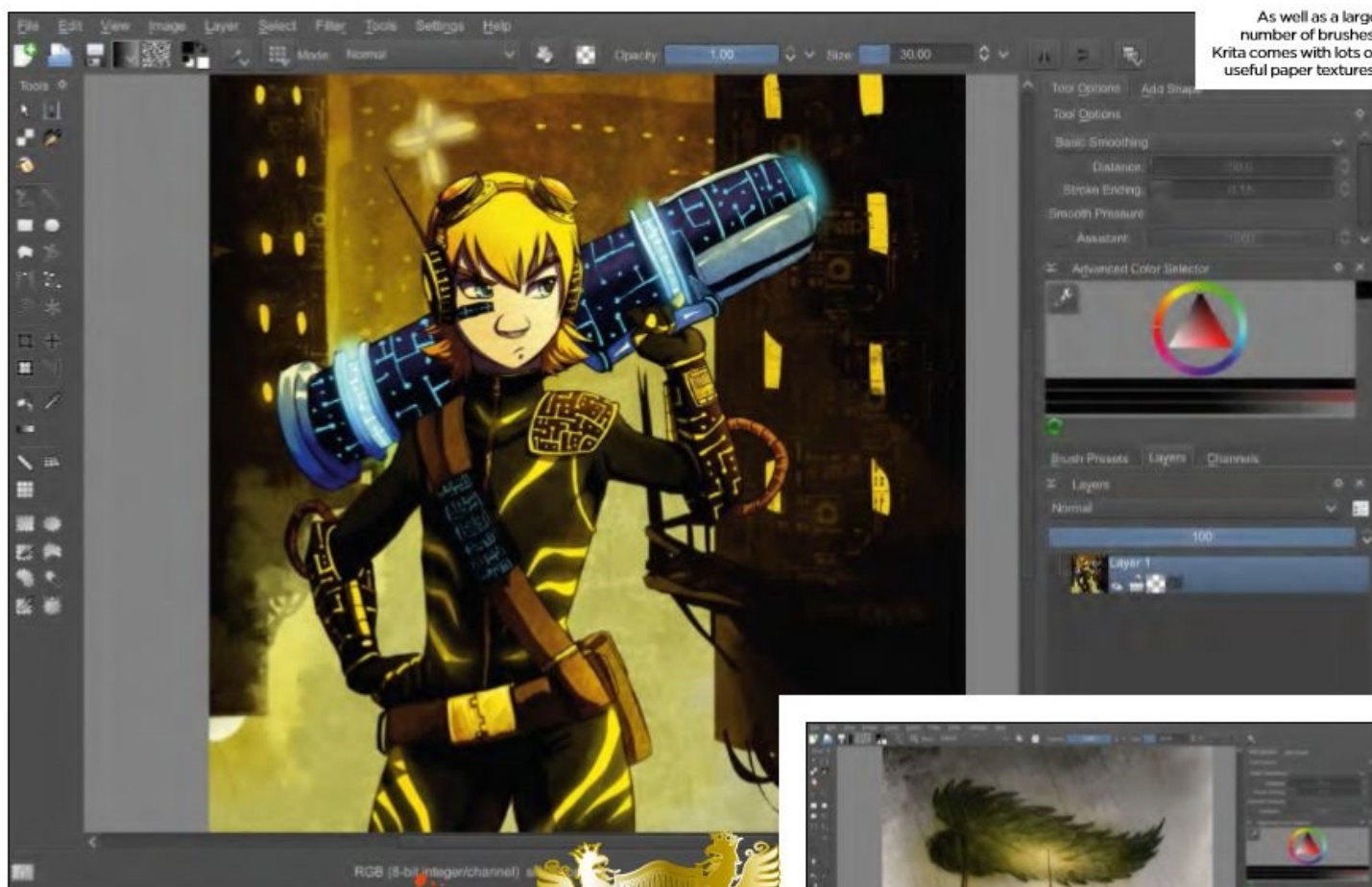
### 96 New reads

The Art of Blue Sky Studios; I'd Love to Draw!; 3ds Max Projects.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious





## Krita

PC ONLY



**KRITACAL ANALYSIS** Updates to the free open-source software have thrust it into the big league



Better than the real thing: Krita's brushes are as good as Painter's, if less flashy.

**Price** Free (or £30 via Steam) **Company** Krita Foundation **Web** [www.krita.org](http://www.krita.org) **Contact** Via website

**F**irst released almost 10 years ago, Krita has always had lofty ambitions. The software is billed as an alternative to Corel's Painter or Paint Tool SAI, but with one major twist: it's free and open-source, in much the same way as GIMP. A recent push to speed up development of Krita, beginning with a successful Kickstarter campaign, has manoeuvred the software back into the spotlight.

Fire it up and it's clear that Krita isn't half-baked or a amateur's home project: indeed, it looks and feels very professional. The software comes packed with templates for US or Manga-style comic books, popular design ratios and DSLR camera resolutions. There's support for CMYK and RGB colour models (among others) and a variety of predefined pixel-per-inch settings.

The highly professional approach continues when you're presented with the blank canvas. It adopts Photoshop's charcoal colour scheme, and the layout is intuitive and familiar to anyone who's used Photoshop or Painter: tools to the left, textures and

**“There are lots of features we'd expect in paid-for software, but in Krita they're free”**

gradients at the top, Painter-style colour selection triangle to the right.

Like Painter, Krita is all about the brushes. While they aren't quite as showy as Painter's, they're still remarkable digital versions of the real thing. It ships with over 100 brush

### DETAILS

#### Features

- OpenGL canvas
- Wrap-around mode
- Multiple brush engines and blending modes
- Advanced selection and masking tools
- Symmetry tools and drawing aids
- Filters and effects
- Layer and colour management
- Perspective grids
- GBA, Gray, CMYKA, Lab, YCbCr colour models
- Vector editing

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows/Linux (64-bit preferred), 4GB RAM, Wacom compatible  
**Mac:** Experimental support only

#### Rating

★★★★★

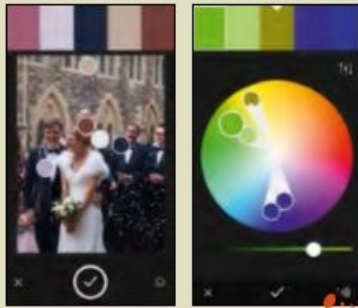
presets, but there are many user variables and a community surrounds the software, enabling users to create and share brushes.

There are lots of features, such as HDR painting and cage manipulation, that we'd expect to see in paid-for software, but in Krita they're completely free. If you feel like chipping in you can donate, or you can buy Krita as an app via the Steam digital distribution service. This option will cost you £30, but you gain access to the app with free updates for life. Of course, you can simply download it for free, but it does feel good to give a little for a lot of software.

The only downside is a lack of Mac support, but this is being worked on right now. Otherwise Krita is a fine example of what's possible when enthusiasts work together on something they love, and all the better for being free and independent.



In Live mode a series of five circles home in on the most prominent hues in the frame.



## Adobe Color CC for iOS

ios

### SNAPPY HUES

Capture inspiring colour combinations when you're out and about

**Price** Free

**Company** Adobe

**Web** www.adobe.com

**RATING**

Creating colour palettes from scratch is a tricky skill to master, but everyday life throws up all manner of colours that combine in novel and inspiring ways. Wouldn't it be great if you could record them for use in CS projects and share them with other artists? Adobe's free app Color CC aims to make this possible.

Opening the app activates your iPhone's camera, enabling you to capture any scene that grabs you – even a selfie. In Live mode a series of five circles home in on the most prominent hues in the frame; tapping the screen freezes the picture and stops the circles roving about so you can manually position them.

Photo mode gives you the choice of taking a snap or choosing one from your Camera Roll, selecting hues, and also applying auto-selection filters such as dark, muted and bright. Colour themes are stored in My Library, where they can be tagged and shared, and individual hues can be tuned via a colour wheel or hexadecimal sliders.

The interface is slick and easy to pick up, and captured themes become available in Adobe CS without any noticeable delay. But with no facility to archive source photos or name individual hues in a theme, Color CC still has room for improvement.

# Painter Essentials 5

**MUST HAVE** We find out if a cut-down version of Corel Painter is worth an aspiring artist's time

MAC & PC

**Price** £30 **Company** Corel **Web** www.corel.co.uk **Contact** 08000 488984

**P**ainter Essentials 5 is the latest version of Corel's answer to Photoshop Elements. Unlike the standard Painter software, which has a rather steep price of £282 and is used by pro artists, Painter Essentials 5 is aimed at people who create digital art as a hobby, rather than as their day job.

This means it has a far more palatable price tag, along with some more user-friendly tools and helpful how-to guides. Unsurprisingly, however, some of the more powerful art tools present in Painter aren't on offer in Essentials 5.

One of the biggest hints that Essentials 5 is aimed at aspiring rather than pro artists lies in the Photo Art tool, which enables you to choose a digital photo and turn into what Corel claims to be a "beautiful work of art" in just three steps.

You can choose from a number of preset styles such as Oil Painting and Impressionist, and Painter Essentials will paint over the photo in the chosen style. The results vary, and if you think you'll get a piece of art with just one click of the mouse then you'll be disappointed. However, it's a good way to see how the tools in Painter Essentials 5 work. You can also tweak and refine the image manually, giving beginners a good platform to work



The welcome screen sets out its stall as a more beginner-orientated tool, with plenty of advice and guides to get you started.

from. Another good feature for aspiring artists is that when you start a new painting, you'll be shown examples of artwork with templates and brush suggestions.

Creating digital art from scratch is easy, and like the more expensive version Essentials 5 enables you to choose the material of the canvas before you begin. This subtly affects the brushes and drawing tools you use to create your art. Even though this feature is tailored towards those starting out in digital art, the attention to detail is impressive, with different brushes and paints reacting to the canvas material in different ways.

If you're keen to start creating digital art with a traditional feel, but want to keep your costs down for now then Painter Essentials 5 is well worth your time. You can try it for yourself by downloading a 30-day trial version from the Corel website.

## DETAILS

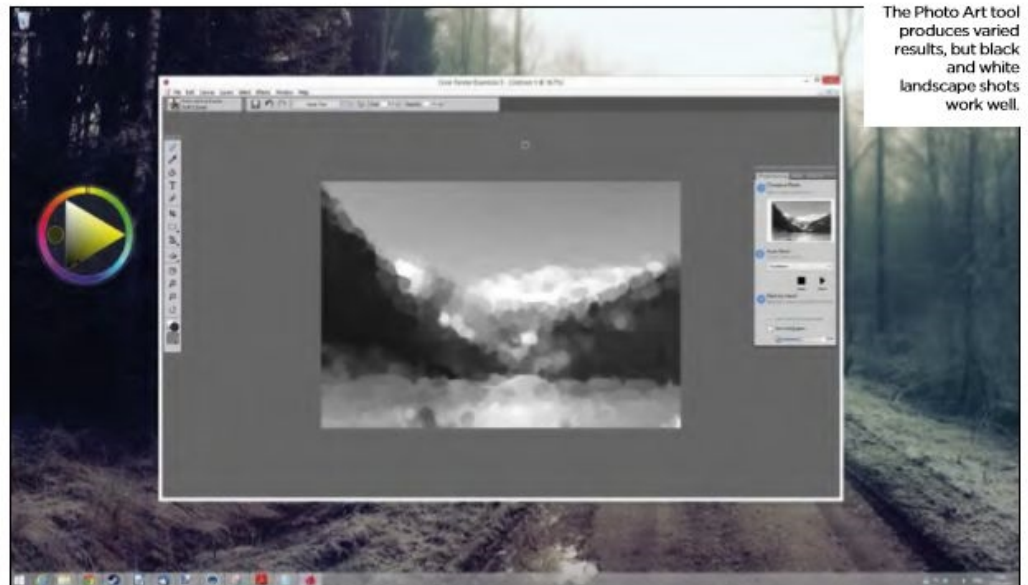
### Features

- Particle brushes
- 64-bit for Mac and PC
- Stability improvements
- Windows RTS support
- New simple interface
- Enhanced photo painting
- Simplified image cloning
- Quick enhancement and effects
- Mirror and kaleidoscope tools
- Real-time effects preview

### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 7 or 8, Intel Pentium 4, AMD Athlon 64 or AMD Opteron, 2GB RAM, 550MB hard disk space, mouse or tablet, 1,024x768 screen resolution  
**Mac:** OS X 10.9 or 10.10, Intel Core 2 Duo, 2GB RAM, 375MB hard disk space, mouse or tablet, 1,024x768 screen resolution, DVD drive, Internet Explorer 9 or higher

### Rating



The Photo Art tool produces varied results, but black and white landscape shots work well.



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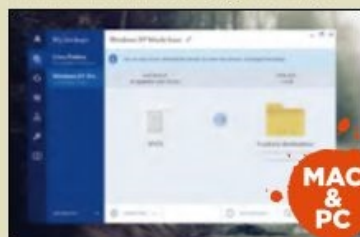
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True Image 2015 has a clear and attractive interface that makes backing up files simple.



MAC  
&  
PC

## True Image 2015

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**Price** £40 (yearly subscription for 250GB cloud backup, £60)

**Company** Acronis

**Web** [www.acronis.com](http://www.acronis.com)

**RATING**

**True Image 2015 backs up a complete image of your computer and stores it either securely on the internet, or on an external hard drive or network device.**

Having a image of your computer means that if something were to go wrong, then not only would your artwork, photos and other files be safe, but all your programs and their settings would be stored as well. So in the event of a disaster you'll soon be able to get your computer up and running again. For those artists who spend an age getting their art program's tool settings, brushes and palettes 'just so', the program's benefits are obvious.

Full system images can be huge, which makes the initial backup process a lengthy one. However, once this is created the program will then use incremental backups, affecting only files that have changed. This reduces back-up times significantly. The interface is clear and easy to use, and each step of the backup process is explained.

True Image is powerful yet simple to understand, and makes the essential process of backing up your digital setup quick and painless.



The program has plenty of options that enable you to back up everything you need.

# U3477PQU monitor

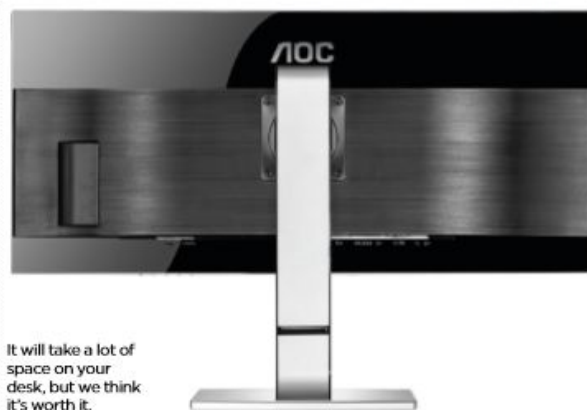
**WIDE BOY** AOC's new ultrawide LED monitor promises plenty of workspace for a pretty respectable price

**Price** £600 **Company** AOC **Web** [www.aoc.com](http://www.aoc.com) **Contact** Via website

**T**he move from standard square monitors with aspect ratios of 4:3, to widescreen monitors with 16:9 and 16:10 aspect ratios was revolutionary, with the increase in screen real estate giving artists a lot more space to work with. AOC's U3477PQU takes things even further by increasing the aspect ratio to a whopping 21:9 and calling it, rather unsurprisingly, "ultrawide".

It certainly lives up to the name, giving you almost the same desktop space as two widescreen monitors next to each other. The high resolution of 3,440x1,440 not only makes images look fantastic, but also helps give you plenty of space in which to work. You can even rotate it to work on portrait images, thanks to a swivel base.

The LED monitor enables you to have a number of programs and windows running side by side, which makes using references while painting a breeze. The TN (twisted nematic) panel is found in more expensive monitors, and reproduces colours brilliantly. Contrast ratio is also handled very well, with deep blacks that add a vibrancy to images with lots of bright colours.



It will take a lot of space on your desk, but we think it's worth it.

At 34 inches this is a big screen, and it's going to dominate your desk. However, in our time using the monitor we were mightily impressed with its performance, and the extra space that the ultrawide build provides has a positive impact on productivity.

It's also quite a bit cheaper than some of the other ultrawide monitors on the market, such as LG's 34UM95, which costs around £200 more but has roughly the same hardware spec. However, LG's monitor does come with a Thunderbolt port for Macs - something the AOC monitor doesn't.

## DETAILS

### Features

- Adjustable stand
- 3,440x1,440 resolution
- 34-inch screen
- 21:9 aspect ratio
- 2 USB 2.0 ports
- 2 USB 3.0 ports
- Eco mode

### Rating



The ultrawide aspect ratio of this monitor does wonders for productivity.



# net

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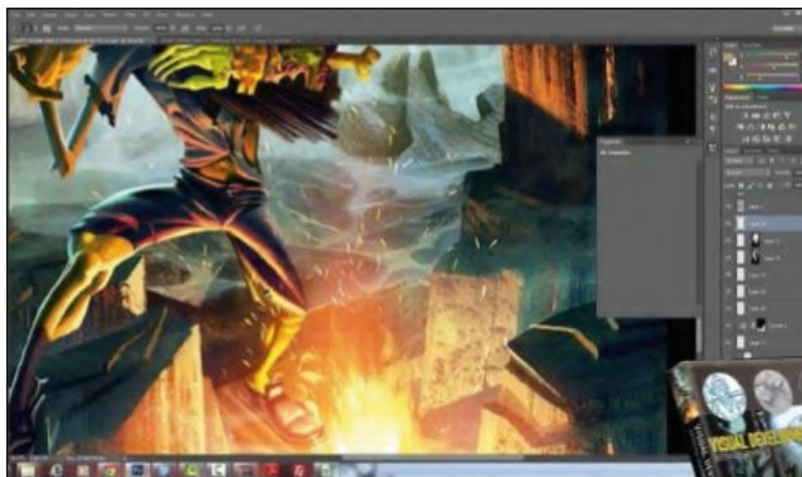
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Gil Rimmer's story-driven approach to illustration comes from an animation and design background.



Gil uses the Curves tool to build up basic colour washes, then supports the colour schemes with painted-in details.

Fire and fog are among the effects Gil adds towards the end to deepen the richness of the scene.

## Visual Development for Feature Animation

**DESIGNED ART** Concept designer Gil Rimmer shows how to create a piece of art where every element supports the story and characters



**Publisher** The Gnomon Workshop **Price** £37 **Format** DVD/download **Web** [www.thegnomonworkshop.com](http://www.thegnomonworkshop.com)

**G**il Rimmer's day job involves developing characters and ideas for animation, which means he offers a distinctive perspective in this video. Don't get too hung up over the term animation in the title: this project has nothing to do with timelines and splines in Maya, and everything to do with creating a strong concept and expressing it in imagery. Bread and butter for any artist, whatever field you specialise in.

Gil starts with story and staging: what the situation is and how best to represent it. He has what he calls "the Big Idea" – a simple expression of the theme, look and feel he's after. You'll see how he researches visual signposts for the concept to refer to throughout the project. As he blocks out his composition, he's thinking constantly about what his decisions communicate, tinkering with silhouettes and perspective until he finds a good arrangement.



### DETAILS

#### Topics covered

- Ideation and reference
- Storytelling
- Rough layout
- Design language
- Character development
- Lighting the scene
- Colouring with curves
- Rendering
- Effects and polish

#### Length

130 minutes

#### Rating



Detail starts to develop as Gil considers the lighting, establishing primary and secondary sources to keep major elements separate. He gives some great observations on how light fades over distance, which will help you develop some basic rules of thumb for your own art.

The absence of colour throughout this development work is striking, and Gil has a relatively unusual but effective technique when he finally introduces it. Working with the Curves tool and Layer Masks he's able to rapidly introduce colour washes that work differently in highlight and shadow areas, giving a rich feel with little effort.

Gil has a lot of insightful things to say and an engaging style, so it's a shame the audio quality is so poor. It sounds like it's been over-processed, with mushy acoustics and distracting noise artefacts. At this price you expect better. But although the listening experience is uncomfortable, what's being said is well worth your time. ●

### ARTIST PROFILE

## GIL RIMMER

Gil began his career over 10 years ago as a concept artist, art director and production designer. He now focuses on the creation of animated intellectual properties for film and television. Gil has been on the staff of Mainframe Entertainment and EA Montreal, and was production designer, executive producer and co-head writer of Leo award-winning *Mighty Mighty Monsters*. He recently joined Bardel



Entertainment as an art director, working on DreamWorks Animation's *All Hail King Julien*.

[www.rimmergit.com](http://www.rimmergit.com)





## The Art of Blue Sky Studios

**FORWARD THINKING** Discover how this plucky group of CGI geeks became one of the biggest animation studios in Hollywood

**Author** Jake S Friedman **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £35 **Web** [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com) **Available** Now

**F**ounded in 1987 by six partners, animation company Blue Sky Studios has always wanted to push the boundaries of the form. It was the first studio to develop ray tracing so that light interacted with virtual objects as it should, rather than requiring artists to paint it in later. This opened up the way that CG could be used to create images and animation, and changed it from a geeky cinematic sideshow to a dazzling new way to create animation and entertainment.

As the Art of Blue Sky Studios reveals, the company's projects were small-scale to start with. Yet it steadily moved up the CGI ranks, from talking



In *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*, the hairy heroes experience new dangers in a lush jungle environment.

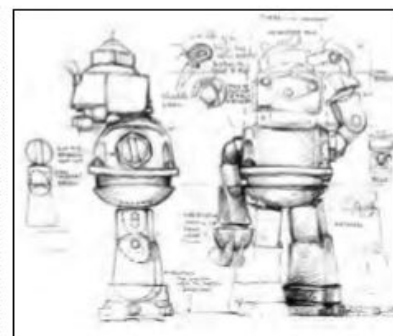


M&Ms adverts, to singing cockroaches in cult movie *Joe's Apartment*, to photorealistic effects sequences in big films such as *Alien: Resurrection*.

In 2002, the studio tackled its first movie: *Ice Age*. It was a challenge for Blue Sky studios to make, especially when ensuring that the snowy landscape didn't look like a big white backdrop. Looking through the book it becomes clear that Blue Sky Studios' solution was to fill the film with swathes of colour, with candle-lit caves, swirling northern lights and blue icy tundras.

Blue Sky Studios didn't limit itself to the *Ice Age*, though. *Robots* takes place in a bizarre world populated by automatons; *Horton Hears a Who* brings Dr Seuss' vivid imagination to life; *Rio* adds talking birds to the real world and *Epic* takes place in a microcosmic woodland world. It all bodes well for the studio's future take on Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* characters.

As an art book *The Art of Blue Sky Studios* is stunning. It's remarkable that watery, vague concepts can suddenly pop to life when it's rendered in a computer, and character breakdowns show just how many iterations were exhausted before final designs were



This Greg Couch sketch from *Robots* shows how detailed the character design process was.

settled on. There's a fascinating discussion of how the studio employed an 85 per cent realistic and 15 per cent cartoony look for *Rio*, which kept things grounded while adding character.

If CG movies are your bag, and you can afford the £35 asking price, then you should look no further than this amazing tome, which is packed to the rafters with amazing art and brilliant ideas. It also tells the fascinating story of one of the most unfairly overlooked animation studios in Hollywood, which has forever lived in the shadow of Pixar.

**RATING** 5/5



# 3ds Max Projects

**MAX POWER** Learn to add a new dimension to your fantasy and sci-fi art with this diverse collection of 3D art workshops

**Editor** Emalee Beddoes **Publisher** 3DTotal Publishing **Price** £31 **Web** [www.3dtotalpublishing.com](http://www.3dtotalpublishing.com) **Available Now**

**F**or 3D visualisation, character creation and animation, 3ds Max has become a go-to tool for artists working in the games and films industries. Yet the software can be tricky and time-consuming to master, due in part because of that extra dimension you have to worry about.

There's never going to be an 'Idiot's Guide' to 3ds Max, but 3ds Max Projects comes close. It features



Andrew Hickinbottom adjusts the skin mesh on his cheerful pin-up character, who's based on a friend he met at a comic convention.



49 workshops by a range of 3D pros including pin-up artist Andrew Hickinbottom and Dmitry Shareyko, who works at games studio Crytek. It's heavy on the text, but this is a given because of the intricacies of 3ds Max.

The book's arranged logically, beginning with simple character creation and moving on to UV maps, topology, FX particles and animation. It's not just about characters: there are

also sections on vehicle modelling and outdoor scenes. The work on display in the final chapters is stunning, especially Andrew's brightly coloured character, and Andrzej Sykut's augmentation of real photography with 3D models. If you've got the time and the interest in 3ds Max then this book is a great place to start.

**RATING**

# I'd Love to Draw!

**OLD MASTER** Art legend Andrew Loomis' long-lost how-to tome finally sees the light of day – but was it worth the decades-long wait?

**Author** Andrew Loomis **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com) **Available Now**

**Y**ou won't find any Photoshop tips or Painter shortcuts here. This is a direct reproduction of art tutor Andrew Loomis' prototype text for his legendary instructional books. Until now, it had been tucked away in the Loomis estate's archives.

Through his light and accessible series of how-to books in the mid-20th century, Andrew popularised drawing as a pastime. I'd Love to Draw isn't quite as polished as his previous reissues,

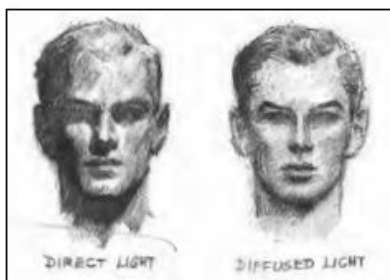


though. There's a sudden lurch forwards from drawing simple objects such as cakes and books to character portraits of then-famous people such as Winston Churchill and Albert Einstein. This feels like something that would have been expanded on at the publisher's insistence.

There are some good tips here, and comic artist and life-long fan Alex Ross supplies plenty of explanatory text

based on Andrew's rough notes. But Fun with a Pencil, the artist's first book proper that came out in 1939, contains all these tips and more while maintaining the charmingly scrappy hand-drawn aesthetic that defined his work. I'd Love to Draw!, then, is definitely one for collectors and the curious only.

**RATING**



In just two pencil drawings Andrew succinctly shows the difference between direct and diffused light.



WORKSHOPS & INTERVIEWS Learn to paint like the fantasy art masters

# Fantasy Art essentials

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## Traditional & digital art

Step-by-step tutorials from legendary artists, including **James Gurney, Adam Hughes, Andrew Jones** and more!

**228**  
PAGES OF  
ESSENTIAL  
ART TIPS

Inside

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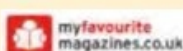
**Brian Froud**  
**Frank Frazetta**  
**Dave Gibbons**  
**Rodney Matthews**  
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If you missed it first time around, here's another chance to learn new painting skills and be inspired by the fantasy art pros!

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NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**  
PRESENTS



# FANTASY

*illustrator*



## HOW TO PAINT A LEGENDARY WARRIOR QUEEN

Kev Crossley depicts Boudica, using an old-school, rough 'n' ready style **Page 108**

### This issue:



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The best traditional art revealed.



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James Gurney creates creatures.



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Bill Sienkiewicz looks back.



## FXPosé *Traditional*

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

### **Martin Wittfooth**

LOCATION: US

WEB: [www.martinwittfooth.com](http://www.martinwittfooth.com)

EMAIL: [info@martinwittfooth.com](mailto:info@martinwittfooth.com)

MEDIA: Oils



Toronto-born artist Martin earned his MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. That was back in 2008. He still lives in New York – with homes in both Brooklyn and Woodstock – and has gone on to exhibit his art throughout the US and Canada.

Numerous publications have printed Martin's work, including cover features in *Hi-Fructose*, *American Artist* and *New American Paintings*. He also teaches art and has lectured at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto and The Museum of American Illustration in New York City.

### IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Giants of the zoology world are all but upstaged by lowly hummingbirds in Martin's photorealistic art. And his lovingly depicted flora serves to add bursts of colour to the backgrounds, like flowering fireworks."

Cliff Hope,  
Operations Editor

### 1 NOCTURNE 1

Oil on canvas, 72x48in

"I exhibited this piece in a group show at the National Arts Club in New York City called Nocturnes."

### 2 INCANTATION 7

Oil on canvas, 75x69in

"This was included in a 2014 solo show, called *De Anima*, along with Montreal-based artist Jean Labourdette."









**Greg Simkins**

LOCATION: US

WEB: [www.imscares.com](http://www.imscares.com)

EMAIL: [contact@imscares.com](mailto:contact@imscares.com)

MEDIA: Acrylic, charcoal, graphite, ink, spray paint



As a teenager Greg Simkins learned his trade as an artist by practising graffiti. "It gave me the confidence to paint large works," the LA-based artist says. "In addition, it taught me perspective and colour theory."

He has since applied these skills to his work with acrylics: intricate surrealist pieces that show how the Old Masters and pop culture, nature and carnival kitsch all inform his art.

"I have become increasingly interested," Greg says "in the rabbit holes we fall down when daydreaming. So many have created worlds in their art in which to escape and inhabit, and for others to enjoy."

**1 GOOD KNIGHT**

Acrylic on canvas, 72x96in

"The idea for this one burned into my head for months after drawing it. Usually an image starts telling me stories. This one wrote chapters for me. Ralf, The White Knight, has set off on the adventure of saving his love interest, with his friend, the blue jay, Breeze."

**2 PASSING NOTES**

Acrylic on canvas, 20x20in

"Often I make paintings with someone in mind, and this was one I felt would speak to my wife Jenn. I wanted it to feel like Alice's flower friend came to life in the 'golden afternoon'. I was working with all over glazes to create mood in the piece."

**3 THE WANDERERS**

Acrylic on canvas, 20x16in

"There are many pairings and groups of characters that live on the 'Outside'. I don't like them to get lazy or bored so I send them on quests. This ragtag group has set off to warn Ralf of the Fool King's bad intentions. These ensembles provide a starting place for me to write and explore this world."

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**IMAGINEFX CRIT**



"Greg's rich imagination and brilliantly bizarre creatures make his art instantly stand out, and fills your head with questions. I love the three-headed tiger-doughnut thing."

**Gary Evans,**  
Staff Writer



# Creative Space



**HEY YOU!**  
Are you a part of  
a regular art class or  
group? Email us at  
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if you want to  
feature here!

## LONDON DRAWING

Co-director **ANNE NOBLE-PARTRIDGE** explains how the group successfully tore up the rulebook and reinvented the life-drawing art class

London Drawing took a residency at the Tate Modern, with the lofty aim of reinventing life drawing. Events held at the gallery took the traditionally static discipline and turned it into something more dynamic: workshops in which attendees used methods and materials inspired by the art and artists on display, with classes using music, props and performance to bridge the gap between attendee and exhibit.

"The workshops encouraged direct engagement, insight and understanding of the collections on display," says co-director Anne Noble-Partridge. "We ripped up the life-drawing rulebook and rewrote it in our own way."

Drawing events with music and performers are common now, but were unique at the time of the residency, which was between 2006 and 2011. London Drawing continues to experiment with its classes, while also being committed to teaching the basics to artists of all levels.

The organisation offers life drawing, life painting and still life, among others, each tailored to the abilities of attendees. Classes give technical advice and demonstrations in key areas such as perspective, anatomy, colour and line. Drawing Theatre showcases London Drawing's more experimental side.

"The basic premise is to distil theatre down to interesting and immersive scenes," explains Anne, "then draw them."



The Orpheus Edition of Drawing Theatre. London Drawing's event with the Little Bulb Theatre was a class mixing art and performance.

It also breaks down the barrier between passive audience and performer. The performer becomes a conduit through which to explore ideas, concepts and materials – rewriting the traditional concept of working from the life model."

Anne says they're in talks with English National Opera, planning new events at unique locations. "The Drawing Theatre involves the audience in an immersive experience, where they are a participant in the creative process. This encourages engagement and genuine creativity."



**London Drawing is a collaboration between professional artists, tutors and performers. For more**

**information see [www.londondrawing.com](http://www.londondrawing.com).**





The Drawing Theatre with performance artists Coffee+Sponge, hosted at Battersea Arts Centre.

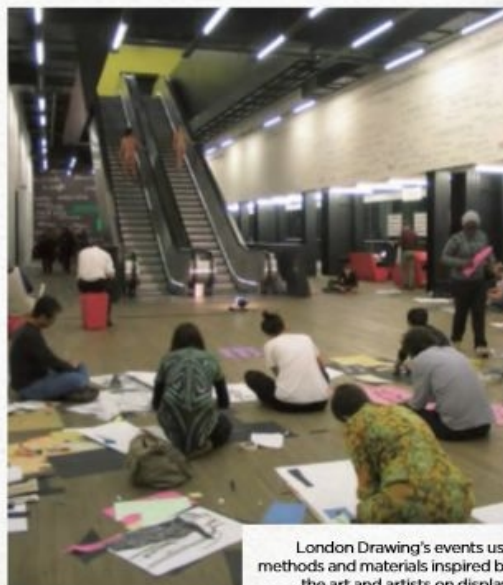


The Red Shoes Edition of Drawing Theatre, in which London Drawing teamed up with Kneehigh Theatre.



The organisation's Drawing from Digital event at the Tate Modern, where London Drawing had a three-year residency.

London Drawing held classes at the Tate Modern, which featured life-performance artists.



London Drawing's events use methods and materials inspired by the art and artists on display.

## CAPITAL CREATIVES

Sketches and paintings from London Drawing's experimental art classes



Art from Drawing Theatre, with performance artist Paul Kindersley.



From Drawing Theatre, Orpheus Edition, with Little Bulb Theatre.



A piece from A Human Orchestration, with models Spirited Bodies.



A colour piece from an event with Theatre Ad Infinitum, at Battersea Arts Centre.



A haunting image of performance artist Le Fil.



The Wild Bride Edition of the Drawing Theatre, with Kneehigh Theatre, spawned this Cabinet of Dr Caligari-esque piece.



Acrylics

Clay

Aluminium

# BUILD A CREATURE MAQUETTE

Whatever creature you're painting, a maquette will provide valuable information about lighting, texture and foreshortening. **JAMES GURNEY** shows you how

**P**aleontology is full of dramatic stories of life and death, but rarely is an event as vividly captured in stone as in the fossils described by Paul Sereno. Several juvenile ornithomimid dinosaurs got stuck while trying to cross an area of soft mud. They became mired in an upright position, suggesting they eventually gave up after struggling to escape. Scientific American Magazine commissioned me to try and recreate the tragic moment.

I begin my work by looking at photographs of the fossils and line drawings of the skeletons. These will be essential for keeping my maquette close to the exact proportions of the actual fossil. I browse the internet for photos of analogous modern mud-stranded animals, to see what happens as they try to escape. I also pay close attention to the geographic orientation of the fossils and make sure that the direction of the sun in the painting corresponds to the sun direction at the fossil site.

## MATERIALS

- Plywood base
- White polymer clay (Sculpey or Fimo)
- Aluminium armature wire
- Machine bolts
- Acrylic paint
- Acrylic gloss medium
- White glue
- Old paint brushes to use for hair-like feathers
- Spherical plastic or glass beads

If it wasn't below freezing outside, I would be out in a muddy pond, wallowing around to see what it feels like to die in quicksand. Anything I can do to experience what my subjects experienced makes my painting more convincing.



**James Gurney once descended a ladder into the Blue Devil Tomb in Tarquinia, Italy. While sketching by flashlight, he heard the sound of gravediggers' tools in the cemetery above him. Follow his adventures at [www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com](http://www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com).**

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**  
See page 6 now!

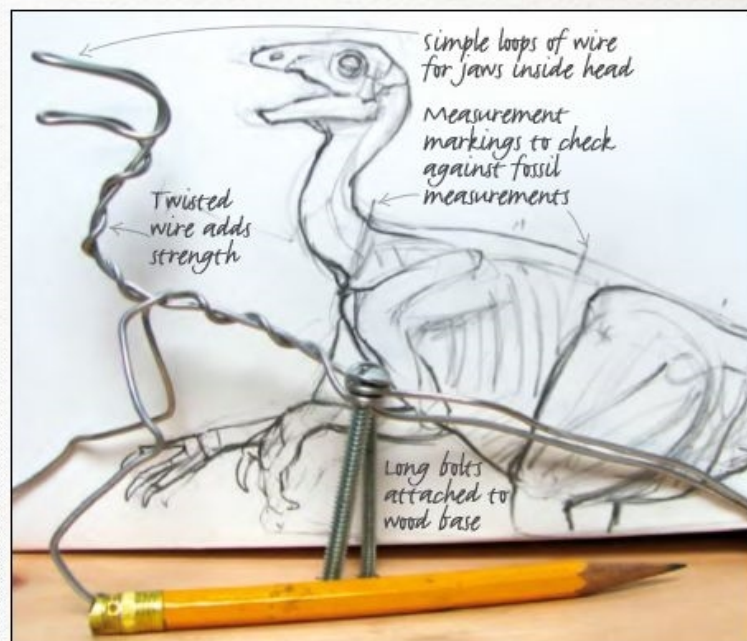
## 2 Scale the armature to a profile drawing

I draw the side view of the animal to the scale I want for the maquette, checking the drawing against scientific diagrams of the fossil skeleton. I twist a skeletal armature out of aluminium wire, making sure that the armature fits inside the outline of the profile drawing. I anchor the armature to a wood base with long machine bolts.



## 1 Imagine it in sketches

Before building a maquette, I draw some thumbnail sketches to explore variations of the idea. These help me to anticipate the pose, silhouette and lighting that best tell the story. I scan them and share them with the art director. For these sketches, I use water-soluble coloured pencils and watercolour.





# Artist insight Creature maquette

Experiment with cracking mud made from flour and water baked in the oven

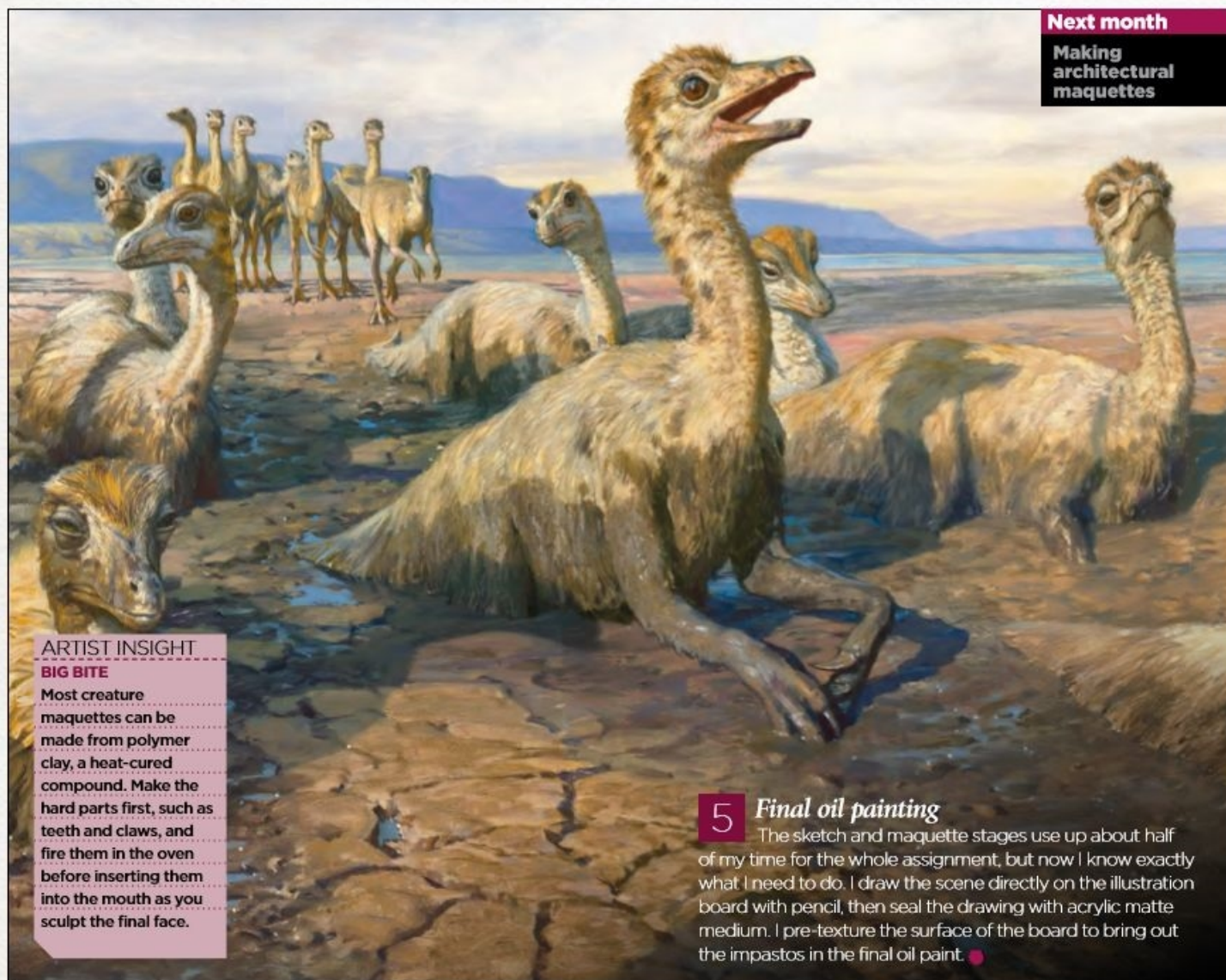


## 3 Sculpt, then bake

If the body is big, I crunch up aluminium foil to fill the central void, so the polymer clay is no more than half an inch thick. I use glass beads for eyes, or sometimes glass animal eyes from a taxidermy supplier. I sculpt only the part of the animal above the mud, and the cracked-mud texture around it. I harden the sculpt by curing it in the oven.

## 4 Paint and texture add realism

I paint the maquette with acrylic, using gloss medium in some places to add specular, or a shiny wet look. For feather textures, I snip off the bristles of an old paint brush and attach them with white glue. I cut more dino silhouettes from cardboard to cast shadows. I move the light and the camera to find the POV that best matches my sketch.



Next month

Making architectural maquettes

### ARTIST INSIGHT BIG BITE

Most creature maquettes can be made from polymer clay, a heat-cured compound. Make the hard parts first, such as teeth and claws, and fire them in the oven before inserting them into the mouth as you sculpt the final face.

## 5 Final oil painting

The sketch and maquette stages use up about half of my time for the whole assignment, but now I know exactly what I need to do. I draw the scene directly on the illustration board with pencil, then seal the drawing with acrylic matte medium. I pre-texture the surface of the board to bring out the impastos in the final oil paint.



# Workshops



Pencils

Pens

Acrylics

## SHOW A WARRIOR QUEEN IN ACTION

**KEV CROSSLEY** reveals the choices he makes when painting the legendary Celtic ruler Boudica in an old-school, rough 'n' ready style

For this workshop I'll be presenting an example of a stripped-down painting technique using acrylics in a very loose way. A great passion of mine is the great fantasy art of the 1940s through to the 70s, so I'm keen to emulate that wild energy and excitement those great painters managed to capture.

I'll also show in detail how the initial design and composition process develops, from the roughest thumbnails to the finished drawing. This part of the process is often quickly glossed over, but I think these preliminary stages are interesting to see, warts 'n' all! The subject I've chosen was the historical bane of the Romans in Britain: Boudica.

When thinking of Boudica there are numerous clichés that invariably come to mind. Popularised during the Victorian era, most of the images we now have of the famous, flame-haired warrior came from or were influenced by Victorian empirical thinking. So, my first problem is how to approach it? Would I embrace

### ARTIST INSIGHT

#### USING A GLAZE

Applying a translucent coloured glaze over an acrylic or oil painting helps to balance colours and smooth out tonal variations.

the well-known depictions or seek a more historically accurate portrayal? The initial idea I have simply to portray Boudica smashing into lines of Romans with her war chariot. Job done? Not quite...

A bit of research reveals that war chariots weren't used in that way at the time, and there are other historical facts to take into account, too. The horses used to pull Icinius chariots would have been little taller than ponies, and because the historical accounts of Boudica were all written by Roman chroniclers, there simply isn't any way of knowing for sure what she looked like, how large her army was or what she did during her campaigns.

All this means, of course, that I'm free to do whatever I like! So I decide to give the Roman soldiers authentic armour, with a few variations to keep things interesting, but for Boudica I opt for a less-historically accurate character. I want to treat her as I would any other hero in a fantasy painting, but as a warrior queen she had to be formidable: less feminine and defined by violence.



After 15 years designing video games Kev turned freelance, illustrating beasts and warriors for gaming books before creating comic art for 2000 AD and various publishers in the US. [www.kevcrossley.com](http://www.kevcrossley.com)



In death, warrior queen





## MATERIALS

### PENCILS

- 2H (useful for fine line-work)
- HB (ideal for strengthening 2H lines)
- 2B to 6B (good for filling in large areas of dark tone)
- Col-Erase (useful for sketching and adding depth to an image)
- Rotring automatic pencil (has a consistent line width)

### BRUSHES

- Use large, wide brushes to build the first planes of tone or colour
- 3 to 6 size acrylic or watercolour brushes are suitable for most of the painting work
- 00 to 0000 for finishing detail

### PENS

- I use a range of pens; from Rotring Pilot and Edding drawing pens to ordinary biro and anything in between

### PAINTS:

- Cryla Artist's Acrylic range
- Winsor & Newton Galeria range



## 1 First thumbnails

This is the very first thumbnail I produce for the image. In classic fantasy style, Boudica as the hero is positioned above a horde of her enemies. I also do a quick tone study and a couple of sketches of Boudica herself in full-on warrior mode.



## 2 Horse and Roman studies

Here are my initial studies for some of the other elements of the painting. I produce a page of horse sketches, along with several pages of Roman soldier doodles. The idea is to give myself plenty of choices when I start building the composition.

## 3 More Boudica sketches

In a similar way I need a few extra ideas for Boudica herself, so I produce a few more sketches, some of which explore a more fantastic portrayal of a giant warrior Queen who dwarfs her Roman adversaries. It's an interesting idea that I put to one side... for now



## 4 Developing the composition

Having selected a pose for Boudica, I begin to develop the composition, using the Roman soldier and horse elements from my earlier sketches. I also rework Boudica's arm, using photos of my own arm wielding one of my son's toy swords that I find in the family dressing-up box. It might look hokey to an outsider, but it works!



## 5 Using a grid for scaling up

Now that I'm happy with the composition, I sketch a grid on to prepared A3 canvas board. This enables me to accurately scale up the image as I develop the finished drawing. To do this I use orange Col-Erase pencil and Rotring automatic pencils. The Rotrings are useful for consistent line width, but the lead breaks easily.

KEEPING  
PAINT MOIST  
CONTROLLING PAINT  
ON THE PALETTE

A water mist spray will  
prevent acrylic paint from  
drying too quickly.



## In depth Warrior queen

### 6 Filling out the drawing

I need another Roman to fill the centre bottom part of the image. To save time I use another soldier sketch as a starting point, but turn him 90 degrees as if he were flying backwards, in pain and shock from the sword that's protruding from his head. The final drawing is now complete, and ready for painting.





**PAINT  
TIP**

**MIXING PAINT**

Try applying paint from the tube and mixing it on the canvas, to create more expressive texture and brush strokes.



**7 Starting to add tone**

I start by painting a transparent wash of grey over the dark parts of the figures and their surroundings. This helps to develop the tones and define the lighter areas of the composition. It also begins to obscure the grid lines that I used in step six.



**ARTIST INSIGHT**

**DIGITAL COLOUR  
BALANCING**

Using Photoshop to adjust the colours, balance and saturation of a scanned painting is the digital equivalent of using glazes!

**8 Inking the lines**

As often happens with an acrylic painting, the pencil lines can become obscured as more paint is applied to the canvas, so I strengthen the line-art by going over it with a black ink pen. This gives me a much more robust base to paint over.



**9 Digital tone studies**

I scan the painting at this stage and produce a couple of digital tone studies using Photoshop. This is a great way to experiment with tone ideas before starting to work them into the physical painting itself.



**10 Adding a transparent wash**

After my digital explorations I turn my attention back to the canvas. I apply a transparent wash of red ochre over the entire painting and begin painting the sky in dark colours, which proves to be a bit fiddly. So I decide to use low-tack art film to mask out the characters first.



## ARTIST INSIGHT

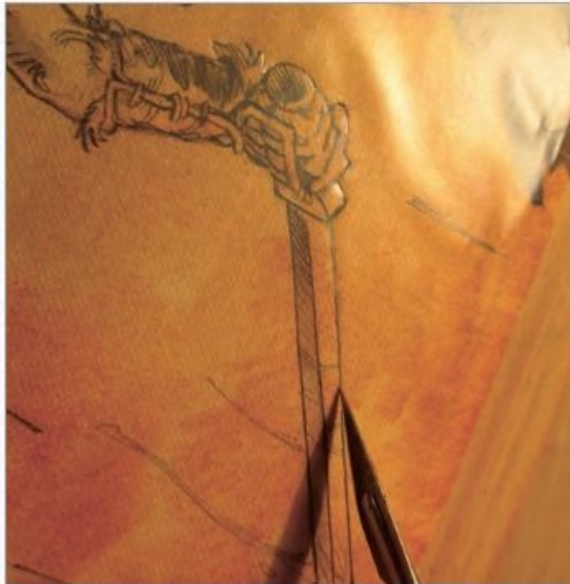
### MIXING MEDIA

Mixing media, such as pens with paints, can result in some interesting effects.



### 11 Using masking film

After the masking film is applied to the painting, I use a sharp scalpel to laboriously and carefully cut around all the elements that are not sky. When this film is removed the characters will be untouched by the paint I'll be using to depict the sky in the next step.



### 12 Painting over the mask

Using various brushes and my trusty toothbrush I paint in a dramatic-looking sky, using the digital tone sketches that I generated earlier as a reference guide. I add some Celtic warriors into the distance too, which gives the battlefield scene a grander scale, and then work some interesting texture effects into the paint.



### 13 Removing the masking film

Once the sky and background are complete I allow the paint to dry before removing the masking film. This must be done very carefully using a scalpel, especially in areas where the paint has been applied copiously!



### 14 Finishing touches

Gradually I develop the light tones in the scene and add colour sparingly. I introduce details to the figures, horses and equipment using pencils, drawing pens and fine brushwork. I also rework Boudica by painting over the areas requiring attention with a white/ochre mix, before amending the figure.



### 15 The finished painting

I choose to call the painting finished. Actually, I think a more accurate description is abandoned! But this is better than it becoming overworked. I want to keep it quite rough and loose to maintain movement and energy, because it encourages the viewer to move past less-developed areas and linger in others. ●



# First Impressions

✧ **Bill Sienkiewicz** ✧

The visionary illustrator still gets a buzz from creating his distinctive art...



**Where did you grow up and how has it influenced your art?**

I grew up in rural northern New Jersey, US. It was beautiful but remote. Lots of farmland, cows, horses, pigs, crops, late summers spent baling hay. More than anything, I learned a work ethic.

**What, outside of art, has most influenced your work?**

Music. All kinds. In art school I got into jazz and blues. More than any other, this style of music fits my style of work and my natural way of expressing myself.

**You're a child. You see a painting or drawing that changes everything. What effect did it have?**

I would get a chill down my spine and a rush of adrenaline. Joy. Excitement. A desire to create something that would give me that rush again. To capture lightning in a bottle. And hopefully bring that same feeling to others.

**What was your next step in art?**

When I become interested in girls I had to make a big decision. I also loved to play guitar, baseball, act and direct. I remember someone saying, "You can't



© DC Comics

## **SUPERMAN BREAKS FREE**

*Superman has a long tradition of breaking free from chains. Here's Bill's dramatic take on the classic composition.*

serve two masters". An odd thing for a kid to hear. But guitar and baseball took a back seat to art – which really was my first love – and I would do acting and directing through comics. No way were girls going to be taken out of the mix.

## **Next month**

**Bruce Pennington**

**Name one person who helped you, and someone who tried to get in your way**

At grammar school my biggest supporter, my most wonderful muse and practically a surrogate mom, was my fifth grade

“My mother had absolutely no idea what I did for a living. I don't think she cared”

teacher Nell Harper. We'd do daily journal writings and I turned them into everything from parodies like Mad to science fiction and comics. She would write little comments in the margins, which were like food to a starving man. She truly inspired me. I guess my biggest impediments were my parents. Until the day she died my mother had absolutely no idea what I did to make a living. I don't think she cared – and if she did it simply didn't register. She was incredibly

## **ELEKTRA CROUCHING**

*Even today, Bill is asked to create new images of Elektra for private collectors.*



self-absorbed. My father wanted me to have a "real job" to fall back on. So I learned electrical wiring – a useful skill for collaged and constructed pieces!

**What was your first paid commission?**

A painting I did of the New Jersey State Art Fair, a sort of Frazetta-Adams mashup of a barbarian – and I won the highest award. I was incredibly thrilled. I sold the painting for \$25 and it showed me I could make a living doing art.

**What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two differ?**

A cover for DC Comics, and the biggest difference is that I'm getting more than \$25 for it. But the excitement is still there, it's never left or diminished. I'm incredibly fortunate that that's the case.

**What are your painting rituals?**

Staying at the easel, drawing board or computer until a piece is done, would be the closest thing to a ritual.

**What's the most important thing you've taught someone?**

Not to take no for an answer and to believe in themselves. And if they ever find themselves asking, "Am I an artist?" then the answer is probably "No I'm not," because there is no question. You simply have no choice.

**What advice would you give to your younger self?**

Stay in the moment. Don't listen to the voices of doubt in your head. Pay attention to life around you. Connect with people. Learn from everyone. Work on yourself as a person. Live consciously. Do that 'examined life' thing. Understand your reasons, your emotions and your motivations. They'll help both your work and your life.

**Why is comic and fantasy art still the best place to be working?**

In a storytelling medium, anything and everything is possible. You're creating joy, awe and work that moves and challenges people's perceptions and adds something to their lives. It's not brain surgery or rocket science, but it shouldn't be. It has its very own place of honour.

**Bill is a writer and Eisner award-winning illustrator who paints for Marvel and DC.**

[www.billsienkiewiczart.com](http://www.billsienkiewiczart.com)



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† World Forest Resources, 1953 and UN FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010

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&  
IGOR CATTO

**TERM - 1**



Production  
Modeling



Anatomy for  
Production 1

**TERM - 2**



Anatomy for  
Production 2



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Production  
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